A Lighthouse Village

By Louise Lyndon Sibley

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A group of sketches which together form a remarkably lifelike story, and they are so well drawn that the book portrays effectively a little lighthouse village on the New England coast. There is much dialogue between the lighthouse keepers, their wives, and neighbors. These persons have strongly marked individuality, and their talk is sententious, suggestive, clever, and full of a vigorous, pungent humor.

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A LIGHTHOUSE VILLAGE

LOUISE LYNDON SIBLEY

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A LIGHTHOUSE VILLAGE

BY

LOUISE LYNDON SIBLEY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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To my Husband.

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A LIGHTHOUSE VILLAGE

CHAPTER I

A KITCHEN COURT

His fat pony strayed promptly down the road when Captain Gibson went up the garden path to Mrs. Padelford's back door. But presently the pony stopped and looked round at the captain racing back down the path. They always did this. The captain turned the buggy in a big circle that swept both sidewalks, scolding comfortably to himself.

"I 've as gret a mind as ever I hed to eat to jest try a genuyne slip-noose on ye, ye durned ole bag o' bones, an' let ye hang yeself, I be," he said, patting the pony and carefully tying a knot that a gale of wind could n't loosen.

There was a visitor before him at Mrs. Padelford's. Ethan Benedict's loose bulk was tilted against the wall on the back legs of a chair, and he was talking. Mrs. Padelford was not exactly listening, but she cheered him on occasionally from the depths of the pantry, where she went on with her work. When some unforeseen crash of pans had obscured his remarks she called "How?" after the din. "You go right on, Ethan, I can hear ye, how did ye say they did?" Ethan was just telling how, when Captain Gibson came in and bestowed himself opposite to Ethan, an audience with time to sit down. Captain Gibson could talk when his turn came, but his most endearing accomplishment was listening. He sat with his fine old gray head on one side, his weather-beaten face fairly written upon with good-natured interest. The captain carried about with him a store of encouraging and appreciative exclamations, not very carefully assorted in meaning, but dealt out

with an emphasis nicely befitting the occasion and forming a background of luminous interest against the dimmest narrative of the least interesting narrator.

"I was tellin' Mis' Padelford 'bout the Jordan's wreck, las' night," said Ethan.

"My Lord!" said Captain Gibson, eager and beaming.

"That old schooner we seen layin' off to the east'ard"—

"Eggsackly!"

"'Long the aige the evenin' she busted"—

"That 's so, sir, jest so!"

"Into a sand-digger that had n't oughter ben off'n the nest, sech a night as 't was."

"Quite right, sir, quite right."

"An' next thing she piled onto the beach"—

"My conscience!"

"Down below the light!"

"Below the light; of course; jest so, sir."

"Well, I wuz abed myself, 'long 'bout the tail end o' my watch, an' ole Jordan he hauled me up a-banging on the door an' hollerin'" —

"I want to know!"

"For me to git up an' set out his watch while he fixed them men. There warn't nothin' to eat in the house" —

"Well, well, that 's too bad," from the captain.

"I told you so," said Mrs. Padelford at the pantry door. "I told you them Jordans allers did sail close to the wind on vittles."

"Well," said Ethan, coming down onto the front legs of his chair with a bang, "Well, sir! there was ole Jordan standin' on his head, never did know nothin' an' could n't tell nobody half o' that" —

"Lord!"

"By George, the sight o' that man does rile me so I — I — I — Well, I don't care a cuss, s' long as he don't sass me, but he 's the devil an' all to live on an island with" —

"Sho! you don't tell me!"

"An' keep a light under."

"Mean man," said Mrs. Padelford at the pantry door. "Can't say nothin' too bad of him. He 's holler an' he 's bad clean through to daylight on the other side. Well, what did them men do for vittles, Ethan?"

"Well, ole Mis' Jordan she set out some crackers an' milk, an' they eat that" —

"Lord!"

"Oh, I seen 'em through the winder; I warn't settin' up in no lantern that time, I tell yer, an' ole Jordan he fetched 'em up some cider apple sauce an' they eat that, an' all the time them men wuz wet to the skin, wet an' blue! blue as brimston'! I tell ye!"

"Orter hed hot vittles," cried Mrs. Padelford inside the pantry. "She 'd orter cooked 'em up a mess er suthin'."

"Well, Maria, she was hoppin' mad, an' she wanted to, but 't warn't mornin', an' the

ole lady would n't. Well, come daylight an' 'long slack the tide an' wind kinder blowed the fiery aige off of her, them men they run the ole man's dory down an' out an' mosied roun' that ole drowned wrack till they turned up a seal top can of coffee, an' come ashore with it!"

"My conscience sake alive!"

"Oh, I was a-layin' fer 'em, I tell ye what, 'side the tower, an' I hed a good can condensed milk an' a leetle mite o' sugar in a baig to go in their pocket, you know, so 's not to rile the ole lady too bad, her seein' of it" —

"Of course! Quite right; yes, sir!"

"An' I laid for the foremost feller an' I give it to him, by gosh, an' bet yer life he did n't say, 'No, thank ye.' Moses! them men wuz hungry! That 's what they wuz! An' cold!"

"Yes, yes, so they wuz!"

"An' I says to the foremost feller, I says, 'Look a-here, old boy,' I says, 'if I run this

ere lighthouse myself,' says I, 'I 'd butter yer bread four sides,' says I, 'damn it!' I ain't no eight-day saint myself" —

"Of course not! No, sir!"

"An' I ain't no — Lord, I jest hed a front tooth hauled out, an' kills me ter talk. An' I ain't no Sunday man, neither."

"Eggsackly!"

"But I swan I ain't so bad as ole Jordan. He 's the devil himself."

"There, there, Ethan, you mus' n't git so mad," said Mrs. Padelford, soothingly, moving about within easy hailing distance, now. "I don't mean to blaspheme no man's character myself, not ole Mis' Jordan nor nobuddy else" —

"Oh, I 'll let him alone long as he don't give me no back chin!"

"Of course! Quite so!"

"But you do kinder forgit yourself, Ethan, onct in a while," said Mrs. Padelford. "Mr. Jordan is a feller bean an' you got to live with him, or throw up your

job. An' so them poor fellers did git their supper — or breakfast. An' who got the pickin's out o' the vessil, Ethan?"

"Lord! who d' ye s'pose? Why, Jordan did. Grabbed every darned thing come ashore, an' he'll hang onto it, too, all the law'll let him."

"Well! well! well!"

"Well, there's one way o' lookin' at it. If Jordan's the meanest man on top the ground, there ain't nary other."

"That's a fact. That's so, sir. Yes, sir. I've knocked round consid'ble, fore an' by, an' it's my exper'ence that folks along shore or anyways connected with salt water is most gen'ly folks with bowels. They'll kill 'emselves ter help a man an' never know they done it. Now I recklect I see a piece in the paper after the Mary Etta went down. I seen her when we wuz joggin' 'long same gale off the Salv-ages. I seen her flag half mast, an' thinks I, here's a mess, but we got to do it. Got to do somethin'. So we

double-reefed the mainsail an' took the bonnet off'n the jib an' run in by inside the Salv-ages, calc'latin' t' anchor, an' I dunno how we done it, but we did. We sent off a dory. Same gale took two sticks clear out'n the Lizzie Jane. Well, the Mary Etta fellers wuz jest all bunged up, by thunder! I 'lowed they 'd fall apart 'fore we landed 'em, but the citizens an' wimming folks took a holt an' fetched them fellers through. An' there warn't no hospital in town, nor a doctor but one. An' I see the piece in the paper awhile after talked 'bout the noble conduct o' the citizens o' Rockhaven, an' so forth down the colyume. Lord! lots o' folks hez got folks at sea round these parts, an' I tell you when the wind whistles it hits more 'n one woman's heart — an' man's. So ole Jordan seems to be kinder off, that way."

"Well, I should say as much. He 's a regular ole — Come right in, Captain Bunce, spread yerself! Come jest in time to help us cuss!"

And Ethan filled his pipe, and Captain Bunce filled his pipe, and Captain Gibson filled his pipe, and they threshed again the barren grain of Mr. Jordan's soul.

Mrs. Padelford became stationary. She yearned visibly for news of the captain since his last visit.

"The last time you was here," she said, "you did n't hev no carpets down, nor no hens. How 's your wife like where you be?"

CHAPTER II

IVYWYND

"Well," said Captain Bunce, "you see we ben livin' over to Ivywynd 'bout year 'n' a half now, day after Decoration. We moved right out as soon as I could buy up a house after I took out my papers for capt'n. An' I dunno how 't is, but what with intrist on the mortgage, an' car fares, an' one thing or 'nother, seems as if I warn't no ways better off than I wuz afore. An' gittin' three hundred dollars more capt'n than I gut secont mate. When we wuz livin' over back the Charlestown Navy Yard we warn't payin' but twenty dollars rent fur a whole house, — but we got ten dollars fer the upper floor. We let one o' the floors the whole time, top or bottom. Well, wife says

we can't let none o' the house we got now out to Ivywynd — says 't ain't jest the thing, — I b'lieve that 's what she says; it 's a kind of a sooburb, Ivywynd is, out'n the city a little ways on the B. & M. road — awful sight more stylish than the Charlestown deestrict, where we 've kep' house ever sence we wuz married. Sa'r Lizzie an' me we 've fetched up our whole fambly there fer nineteen years. An' wife says there don't nobody out to Ivywynd let their upper floor. But I hain't got no fault to find with that, ef that 's what a sooburb is for — only it beats me what that 's got to do long o' my lettin' piece my prop'ty ef I see fit to. Well, so my livin' expenses is jest — well — jest a little mite more, I guess, than they wuz when I wuz gittin' six hundred a year, long back two years ago.

"My folks hez ben at me fer long time ter hev 'em a house in the sooburbs. Mostly Melia 't was, my oldest girl, an' all the girl I got. So she an' wife they went an' they

picked out one they said ud do 'em, an' warn't nothin' fer me to do but buy it, so I did. An' my Lord! they jest moved in an' set out to spread over the whole of it. Lemme see, there 's the kitchen, an' the dinin' room ez they call it, but we hev our supper 'n' breakfast there too. An' the parlor, them 's on the fust floor. Upstairs there 's my room an' Sa'r Lizzie's, that 's one; an' Sammie's, that 's two; an' Melia's; an' a kind of a small room without no window does fer Johnnie. An' the bathroom. You see that 's eight rooms fer a small fambly of five. We did n't hev but five rooms over to Charlestown, an' here 's wife an' Melia coaxin' to hev sump'n or other finished off in the attic fer a girl or folks stoppin' over night to sleep in. Now, ef I hed my way, me an' wife would hev that ere dinin' room fer a bed-chamber — I allus was a terrible hand to sleep on fust floor — an' then eat in the kitchen same as we allus done over in Charlestown, an' hev them

two boys okkerpy one room as they 'd oughter. But they spread round so, I guess, mostly because the house is het with a furnace, an' all the doors is open through the house.

"Well, now, it is kinder pleasant havin' everybody hev a place to go to. Same as my Sammie, now, he 's got him a jig-saw, an' he 's learnin' shorthand, too, an' so he 's up there consid'ble into his room, an' nobody don't worry him, don't you see? An' Melia, she 's settin' up there good part the time in her bedroom, a-sewin', an' a-writin' her letters, an' a-talkin' to her lady friends she hez up there. An' take it in the evenin', now, or Sundays, you see, I can set in the dinin' room an' hev my pipe, an' wife hevin' her little doze on the sofy, whilst my boys an' the girls is in the parlor a-playin' the pianner an' singin', an' keep the door shut the noise don't bother me none. An' Lord! ef they holler too loud, so I can't git my nap, well, I jest go out in the kitchen an'

set. So you see it 's handy, hevin' sech a terrible large house, after all, some ways. Kinder pretty house, too, on the outside — all jogs an' pillars an' porches, an' lumpy on the roof. I says to wife the day we moved out, says I, ' Looks like an old ship goin' 'fore a gale o' wind with one stunsail set,' says I. I b'lieve they call it a dormet window or sump'n or 'nother. I hain't lived under but a pitch roof, so I 'm sorter slow to take to notions. All the houses up an' down our street hez mostly got same kind o' jibs as ourn, so I guess I 'll git used to it after a spell.

" Queer about them houses, too. I swear if we hed n't ben in our house a month before I see the next man down street hed him a kinder of a little piazza concern onto one side of his house, same as warn't on my house ez fur ez I 'd seen. But, I says to myself, says I, ef he 's got one there I 've got one too, — an' sure eno', come to find out, so I hed ; got a piece o' my own house

I hed n't seen! I tell you it warn't long job my goin' out an' roun' an' lookin' at it all sides. (There ain't no way o' gittin' to it 'thout you go out the front door an' roun' side the house.) Well, so we got us some o' them squares o' carpet they sell, I call 'em carpet squares, but Sa'r Lizzie says I ain't to say only 'squares.' Well, we got 'em, well — most a year ago. At least wife an' Melia they bought 'em into the city. An' when they come home, hanged ef they warn't short of the mop-board more 'n two feet all sides. Wife said she 'd make 'em do, an' hed in a man polished up the floor where it warn't covered, an' then he dusted, an' sent me in a bill ud half paid for a new carpet, so I asked Sa'r Lizzie what was to do, and she says to me to pay it, he done a good job. Well, I tell yer, them rooms looks queer. I says to wife, I says, 'Looks as ef we could n't afford big enough carpet,' but she said 'No' and that 's all she said. An' so, one way or 'nother, the

money goes — new furniture an' things to stick up roun' the room. But wife does like the kitchen. I 'm real glad I got the house, ef it warn't only on 'count the kitchen. Wife says it 's puffickly lovely, and I hain't heard her say so much of any place else in the house. Hot an' cold water right over the sink; pile up your dishes an' turn the water on — no haulin' an' luggin' a teakettle off'n the stove. That ere kitchen range burns more coal than any stove I ever see. Costs me a pile o' money fer coal fer that an' the furnace.

"Then there 's my fares. Over home, I mean over to Charlestown, when the old boat wuz tied up nights, there I wuz, you see. Jump on a ferryboat, an' took me right to my own door, so to speak. But livin' where we do now, over to Ivywynd, there 's my horse-car fare to the deppo, an' my steam-car fare, an' after jiggin' long, stop an' go ahead fer half an hour, where be I? Why, I 'm half a mile from my house,

an' got to walk up a hill an' down a holler, an' walk in the road, too, 'cause there ain't no sidewalks set out yet. Wife says they will be soon, it 's a growin' sooburb, says she.

"Well, I dunno how 't was, but I mistrusted sump'n ud hev to give when wife got thet pie knife o' her'n, here couple years back, although the pie knife warn't wife's so much as it was Melia's. I says to wife, I says, 'Sa'r Lizzie,' says I, 'what 's the matter with doin' as we done ever sence we ben to housekeepin' — hain't we lived comfortable an' lovin' 'thout no pie knife?' says I. But wife she looked so kinder down an' feelin' bad, I hed n't nothin' more to say, only to shut up. An' next thing I knowed we muss git us a house out to Ivywynd. An' as I say, it 's a real nice comfortable roomy kind of a house, on'y it hez drawbacks, same as ev'ry house, I s'pose. There 's one thing in pertic'lar I wisht warn't jest as 't is, an' that 's the clusets.

I allus ben a terrible hand fer clusets, myself — 'board a ship an' ashore both — an' (curus, ain't it? jest my luck) there ain't a single cluset in that whole house.

"I hev to hang up on a nail, so to speak, as regards my cloes. Wife thinks them squares is goin' to be a darned sight easier to keep the moths out of than carpets is, an' I dunno but what she 's right. Thinks there won't be no need takin' of 'em up in the summer time while she 's up to mother's fer the month o' July, same as we done with the carpet over to Charlestown; gret piece o' work, ef it warn't but one, the on'y one we hed. She thinks ef I jest go roun' the aiges o' them squares onct a week no wool-worms won't git real lodgment — the pepper 'll kill 'em. Well, so I s'pose I got ter git down on my knees, come July, an' pepper the aiges o' them squares. I s'pose Sa'r Lizzie knows what ought to be done. We hain't hed them squares over one summer yet, an' I dunno but what Sa'r Lizzie 'll

think she can't gwup to mother's this comin' July. I 'm real glad I got 'em that house out to Ivywynd, ef it don't fit me jest the same as did over home, I mean over to Charlestown."

CHAPTER III

THE DOG WATCH

Captain Gibson sat uneasily silent while Captain Bunce told his story, and when it seemed to be done he rose and backed to the door, smiling good-bye with possibly a shade of disappointment on his bright face.

"Gret little man, I vow," said Captain Bunce in soliloquy. "Buried his third an' lookin' for his fourth, eh, Mis' Padelford?"

"Oh, go 'long, Captain, you do hector a body so. He jest comes here to meet up with everybody, that's all they is to that. He drives up from the buoy station two three times a week for provisions, that's all, an' comes here. I don't see nothin' queer in that."

"Sure. Who said so! Now don't you

git pepp'ry, Mis' Padelford! He 's a gret little man. I tell ye he 's a credit to ye, an' I hope to be invited."

Ethan had gone out shortly after Captain Gibson, and left the field to Captain Bunce, who had news.

"Speakin' of invitements, what think of Ethan's leavin' the light? 'Pears by the way he talked when he wuz in here he did n't know he wuz. But I hear they 've took his resignation an' goin' to fetch John over from Sculpin in his place."

"I think the gov'ment 's made a mistake," said Mrs. Padelford, weightily. "John wuz fust-class where he wuz, an' where he 's goin' he 'll be in hot water the whole time. Him so frolicsome an' so jolly an' so free an' easy. He 'll make Jordan mad, set or stand. Poor John! There 's trouble to come for that boy. An' what 'll ole Jim do alone on Sculpin?"

"Well, he 's got to go too. Reg'lar game o' noses. But he 's kind of a pet of

some o' them Navy fellers 'long of his losin' his eye or somethin' in some fight o' ruther he mixed up in with 'em some time o' ruther, an' they 've got him a soft snap round headquarters, I believe. 'Pears he warn't a real livin' success light-keepin', although he done all he could to spite John an' make trouble up t' the office. But that ain't the worst. They 've got a reg'lar ole fool comin' there now. Why, from the looks of him I don't believe he hardly even seen salt water, an' he 's scat to death of a boat. Looks like he 'll land on Sculpin an' jest live till he dies. I told the inspector when he come up in the pilot house this morning, I says to him, ' 'T ain't none o' my business, sir,' says I, ' but I 'd like to know ef a duck would n't set better on Sculpin than a hen, sir,' says I, an' he bust out laughin' an' said how the ole man wuz a Union soldier an' hed a splendid record and so forth, an' it wuz jest his turn on the list, that wuz all. ' Don't take long to try 'em,' says he, ' an' they all

know they've got to go double quick if their light 's poor.' Now 'pears to me the gov'ment's head ain't exactly plumb, so to speak."

"I'm real sorry for him," said Mrs. Padelford. "It's terrible lonesome out on Sculpin, an' Jim wuz awful scat when it blowed hard. Who 'll he hev fer 'sistant?"

"Nobody. They've discontinued the fog signal an' fixed the light stiddy, an' they calc'late one man 'll run the whole thing."

"My land alive!"

"Yes, marm. That's jest how the land lays to-day. Well, I must be goin'. By George! I b'lieve I smell cabbage."

"Yes, you do, Captain," said Mrs. Padelford, with pride. "I got a whole head in that pot. Better hev some. Pleased to hev you stay to dinner. Captain Gibson gen'ly does. I some expected he'd remain to-day. He's a dear lover of cabbage,

Captain Gibson is. He could eat his weight in it. An' me too. An' I got a handsome piece o' boiled beef on, I 'd be pleased to hev you eat of."

"Well, I don't calc'late you 'll hev to tie me down to keep me, Mis' Padelford. I 'm so holler now I dunno but I 'd fall in 'fore dinner time, an' I vow I do set a lot by beef — all kinds o' beef — lamb, ram, sheep, an' mutton — ho ! ho ! "

And presently dinner was ready for two.

"You set a real stylish table," said the Captain, drawing up promptly. "Ever see Mis' Jordan's dishes on trew? Lord ! I 'd say a squall hed struck 'em. But you hevin' ben right on the island, I guess I can't give you no pointers on Mis' Jordan."

"I hain't ben over now for quite a spell back, sence that time of the plate," she said. "You heard about that plate? "

CHAPTER IV

THE TOP PLATE

"SHE wuz the most pertic'lar woman I ever see, an' that 's why I did feel kind o' backward 'bout goin' 'cross to the islan', an' her not lookin' fer me, since I hed n't went fer some time. But bein' extry good op'-tunity to go 'cross with husban' to fix their foghorn, I concluded mebbe she 'd see me some ways off an' slick up to suit herself. She wuz a dredful able woman when the hurry come. Time an' again I 've heard her say she would do more necessary an' onnecessary work round the place after the inspector's boat hove in sight than any other woman bein' notified of his comin'. But she allus wuz real careful anyway, 'bout little things, sweepin' under mats an' behin'

doors, onless somethin' really come ter hinder, every day in the week. An' long as I 'd known her, I don't believe I 'd ever seen her three times with a button off the front of her waist, an' her so fleshy. I ain't that way myself. I guess I be terrible slack, but then I hev lived in a lighthouse, an' I hev heard say some inspectors would n't let ye scratch a match on a fog bank for fear it would leave a mark on the Gover'ment Reservation.

"But as I wuz sayin', Mis' Jordan she 'd be pertic'lar anywheres, any time, an' I guess it 's her real nice ways hez kep' 'em the job so long. I do allus hold to clean up the supper dishes myself, but there 's them that don't, an' Mis' Jordan, too, an' do 'em in the mornin'. An' her daughter, Maria, she 's real smart round, an' extry quick when the inspector's boat comes in sight. Mis' Jordan is heavy on her feet, an' don't hardly ever go in the tower at all, I b'lieve. She does the slickin' up round the

house an' ou'doors while Maria does the light, if the old gentleman is n't to home, after the boat comes in sight.

"So I did feel slow to take her by surprise that day, knowin' they warn't settin' out to hev company, an' knowin' they like to make of folks when they do hev' 'em. Mis' Jordan hez a real lovely home, ef it is small, an' she lives real simple right in the fambly, them three. There 's the front room they open for folks, an' two bedrooms; so they eat in the kitchen. I wuz cal'c'latin' to git acrost so as to strike 'em 'tween meals case o' their bein' short. But I did git there somewheres about four.

"Mis' Jordan hez a real handsome pantry off her kitchen, only kind o' crowded when Mr. Jordan hez to wash hands there time o' cookin'. An' Mis' Jordan is the most pertic'lar woman I ever see. Time again I 've heard her say to her daughter, 'I do wish you 'd comb your head further off'n the spider when I 'm fryin' fish,' an' she

was allus jest so careful 'bout little things like that. One time there wuz a diver down to the island; he give Mr. Jordan a skull he found at the bottom o' the harbor, and Mr. Jordan he wanted Mis' Jordan to use it for a sugar bowl, an' she 's so queer she declared she would n't, up an' down.

"So I stopped round the beach awhile, givin' them a chance to expect me; but seems they did n't. Seems Mis' Jordan wuz picklin' that day, but she wuz real glad to see me. She said she wished I 'd took some other day an' sent her word; but she asked me in, an' we set in the front room. I told her I s'posed I 'd hev to stay supper, husband bein' so long on the foghorn, an' not to put herself out none, but jest make me one o' the fambly. She declared up 'n' down she warn't goin' to, an' her table wuz laid. I could see it from where I set. But she did go out an' talk low to Maria. I do like to see folks make o' their company; I do myself. So we set down an' hed bake

beans, same as usual on Sat'day. She set op'site an' Maria back t' the light, an' then me; an' I see they 'd kep' all their ironstone on excep' mine, an' that wuz one o' grandmother Jordan's weddin' set, I see right off. So by 'n' by Mis' Jordan she gimme some beans on mine, an' I begun. Well, sure 's I live, I see my plate wuz funny. The white wuz kinder dull, an' the blue dots of it kinder dull, an' no shine to the gilt border. An' if you 'll believe it, all under my beans wuz real common dirt! I swallered an' choked a minute, makin' up my mind how to act an' do. An' I see nobody did n't see what I see; so I begun an' eat my beans slow from the top, an' by an' by Mis' Jordan she said, 'Hev some more'; so I did, right on top, an' I see at once it wuz top o' the pile o' grandmother's plates they 'd laid out in the entry closet. I eat my beans down to the last layer, an' I eat my brown bread out'n my hand, an' then, quick as scat, when they wuz n't likely to be

lookin', I swished an' swilled them few beans all over every part an' licked up the dust good, an' then I made some laughin' talk an' said how I guessed my eyes hed been bigger 'n my stummick, an' I 'd be excused fer leavin's! It were n't extry perlite, but land, they warn't no other way ter do. 'T wuz ter save her feelin's. Mis' Jordan she 'd 'a' felt just terrible to 'a' seen that dirt if I 'd 'a' left it, an' her washin' her dishes in the mornin'.

"O Lord! but Jordan! he wuz a bad man! Oh, the meanest that ever drawed breath, he wuz! An' Ed, he never jawed back! We lived on the island ten years side o' that Jordan, but no saint could n't 'a' lived 'longside o' sich a skin, an' Ed he throwed up lightkeepin' an' come ashore. He 'd orter die a dog's death, or worse, that man! Only Ed, he did n't never lose his temper, ef I say it as should n't, an' me so pepp'ry an' his widow as hed n't ought to brag. Poor Ed, an' him in the cemetery an' ole Jordan prancin' 'round!

"You 'd never half believe how mean he wuz ef you wuz told! Why, my Ed he wuz gittin' in hay one day, an' lef' the bar down, an' one o' the cows jest stepped over into Jordan's yard, ramblin' long towards his garding. But my land o' liberty, out come Jordan red as my rooster, an' ef he did n't pick up that bar an' lam the cow over the back!

"Ed, he come right up back, an' he says, 'I 'll take care o' that cow, sir!' says he.

"O Lord! it galled me so, Ed havin' to 'sir' him this an' 'sir' him that — bein' his superior officer. An' Jordan, he called him an awful bad word right 'fore sonny an' Betsy an' me. An' Ed, he never said a word. He jest drove them cows right into the barn, half-past one in the daytime, an' me so mad I 'd like ter jumped up an' down in his tracks!

"The other keepers an' all their wives wuz standin' round, mad or scat, an' when Ed came 'long back I says, 'Ed,' says I, 'ef

you don't go jaw him I shell!' says I. But Ed, he kinder gentled me down, same as he would a cow in a tantrum, an' kinder persuaded me down south side the island rest of the day, outer the fuss.

"'Mr. Jordan, he 'll be feelin' diffrunt tomorrow,' says he, 'an' I 'll step in an' have a little talk with him.' Ed wuz allus jest so peaceful.

"An' Jordan's wife is every bit as bad as he, only sly, an' kinder behind your back. We hed a turrible revival over to the meetin'-house that winter, an' I used to go over when the water was fit. Forty jined, some baptized an' some by letter, an' one night my sister Deborah she went acrost, an' when she come back she could n't hardly wait to git in. She says, says she, 'Eliza,' says she, 'Mis' Jordan 's jined!' says she.

"'You don't sesso!' says I.

"'Yes,' says she, 'an' I could n't hardly b'lieve my ears!' says she. 'Jined by letter!' says she.

"'I want ter know!' says I. 'Well,' says I, 'all I kin say,' says I, 'is, I lived ten years next house to that woman, an' on an island surrounded by water,' says I, 'an' I never so much as mistrusted she was a Christian,' says I, 'an' worse 'n that, a perfessor of religion,' says I."

CHAPTER V

ROBINSON CRUSOE

A GALE was blowing from seaward, sweeping up across the bare pastures and setting the great elms thrashing in the village street. Mrs. Padelford and Beulah sat by the kitchen fire, the table between them with a lamp that held its one little beacon light toward the square, where all was dark.

Mrs. Padelford went to the window once to look at the lights. All the 'longshore folks watch the lights.

"Lord! how it blows," she said. The tall star on Ship Island shone clear through the rain, and the little red and white flashing light on Sculpin Ledge to the eastward blossomed regularly and steadily.

"Lord! it doos blow!" she said, crossing

back to her rocking-chair by the fire, knitting and rocking and remembering. "I hope there ain't no vessils close in tonight," she said; "or if they is any wrecks on Ship Island, I do hope to goodness Mis' Jordan 's got stuff to feed 'em on. That crew that come in off'n a wreck sudden onct, you remember, Beulah — why, Mis' Jordan did n't have nothin' fillin' to give 'em but Boston crackers an' cider apple sauce. She never was real forehanded with victuals — them Jordans live small an' sail close to the wind on fodder any time. I ain't that way myself. Time again when it comes on to blow sudden, when I was to the light, I 've took a lamp an' looked my butt'ry over high an' low to know jest where to lay my hand on all the victuals, an' I 've cut ham ready to fry an' lots of things, case of a crew comin' in sudden. Mis' Jordan, she never did look at a crew way I did. I say a man, an' what 's more, a whole lot o' men, lost off'n a vessil an' lost their cloes,

likely, an' everything, an' kinder low-spirited, I say men like them wants fillin' food — hot cream o' tartar biscuits an' coffee an' doughnuts an' pumkin pie mostly. Not jest cold vittles you happen to hev set by. I 've cooked up vittles for lots o' crews in my day. Lord! don't it blow! Hope there aint no vessils close in to-night! My land o' liberty, there 's somebody at the door! Why, John Taylor! for pity's sake where 'd you come frum, an' what 's happened?"

He never stopped to knock; Robinson Crusoe was "old friends" here. He bounded in noisily, leather jacket and fish boots dripping with rain and salt spray, his cheeks glowing and his eyes snapping with fun. He seated himself serenely near the door and said sociably, "Well, ladies, how 's things over your way? Thank you, marm, I won't come no nearer the fire, so 's not to muss your floor none," hanging his sleek, wet fur cap on his knee to drip and dry.

"That plaguey dory o' mine, she leaks

like thunder. Reckoned she 'd drop from under me comin' 'cross from Sculpin. Christopher ! did n't I hev to pull like the devil ! Big sea on. Dunno as I hauled her up fur nuff on the beach, anyway. Well, if she does git adrift, I guess I kin foot it back to Sculpin — 't aint only mile or so, an' I 'm long ! I 'd hev my head out o' water most the way."

His shaggy black hair dried in a tangle, as he talked, smoothed down from time to time by a hand sent aloft when not fidgeting with his buttons or the chair or his cap.

"I dunno how my man Friday 'll git along while I 'm gone. He 's kinder scat o' that leetle tower o' mine, an' don't he hate wuss'n poison hevin' me gone ! By thunder ! But ef he aint old ernuf ter stay alone nights awhile, I tell him he 'd better be gittin' him another job. Lord ! he 's forty-one, an' me goin' on twenty-five ! An' I ain't scat. Oh, he 's a big fool ! It 's his watch till twelve tonight anyway, an' he can make the old

gal go well enough if he 's a mind to, an' don't go to dickerin' with the machinery."

There was a shade of anxiety in his tone; he rose and tiptoed heavily to the window, peering out to catch a glimpse of his far-away light.

"There she goes," he said. "She 's all right. Red, ten; white, five; oh, I guess the ole boy knows what he 's about, but he 's sech an ole fool, reelly he don't know haf the time which side his bread 's buttered."

Sitting down again, he stretched one leg out while he dragged up from the depths of his trousers' pocket a letter, wrapped in newspaper.

"I come over to see if I could borry a postage stamp," he said; then suddenly laughed aloud at his thoughts.

"Jim 's so scat I did n't say a darned word how I wuz comin' off after supper. I jest set him washin' dishes, and that takes all the mind he 's got, an' snuck out an' let the dory fly; an' when she struck the water

he come a-bustin' out the door on deck; thinks I 'd fell overboard, ye know; and I sings out, pullin' out from the tower, an' the wind a-blowin' — I says, 'Good-bye, Jim,' says I, 'I 'm goin' ter leave yer now;' an' my Lord! he stomped int' the entry an' slammed the door to. Chokin' mad, he wuz. My Lord; guess he hain't got over a-cussin' yet! Allus says when I do somethin' out o' common, says he, 'Deuced tomfoolery,' says he;" and Crusoe buffeted his cap in a tumult of boyish glee.

"When I git back he 'll be awful glad, but he ain't a-goin' ter let on, mind; he thinks I ain't got but half an eye, anyhow, an' ain't never up to his tricks. But I know him, sir — marm, like a book! He 'll let me haul the old dory up single-handed an' think he 's takin' his spite out that way, but good Lord, I kin run all round him, as fer as tricks goes. Why, it don't take more mind than I 've got in my collar-button to git roun' ole Friday. Don't mean no reel

harm, nor I don't never reelly hurt him, but he is sech an ole fool I like ter hector him some. Ef it bloes a haf a puff o' wind he 's scat er the tower tumblin' down. That night it blowed so, — it 's two weeks come next Monday, — I tell yer the old gal shook, an' that 's a fack. But, my gracious! she 's as tight as the hair on yer head, an' don't scare me none. But when we wuz to supper, an' the seas wuz a-bangin' an' a-bustin' on her, an' the dishes a-rattlin', I jest hit the table leg a clip an' says solemn ter Jim, I says, 'Jim, we 're a goner!' an' he up an' down a-prayin'. 'Oh, what 'll we do?' says he. An' I says, 'Jim,' says I, 'mebbe she 'll fall to land'ard,' I says! an' by gosh! warn't he mad when he ketched on!

"I ben washin' to-day; did yer see my washin' out? Washed an' ironed same day. See my shirt? Ain't it clean? Can't I wash good?" he asked brightly, standing up and throwing open his jacket, beating

his breast as if they, too, might come forward if they would and smite upon his manly shirt front.

A fine deep red surged up in his weather-beaten cheeks, in pride of performance. "We gid done terrible quick, we do. Shove the table up 'longside the stove an' let her go. Haint got but one flatiron, so I drive her awhile, an' then Jim, when she's hot agin. But don't Jim make a kick, though! My Lord! Says his'n good enough ef he folds 'em an' sets on 'em awhile; but I don't want no man roun' me what don't iron his cloes good, an' I keep him at it, an' while he's jawin' I jest keep to loo'ard, an' lay quiet. I'm a terrible good washer an' ironer myself, but it's mendin' gits me. I've got a hole in the heel o' this sock I've got on now, an' kills me to wear a hole. An' blamed ef I kin sew it up. An' buttons off, — can't go that neither; I've got three off'n these pants I've got on, but I can't sew 'em on. You bust yer buttons off

terrible haulin' up that ole dory o' mine, every time yer use her; an' 't ain't nuff fer me to, but Jim he 's got to go a bustin' 'em off my cloes 'cos he ain't got nuff of his own to his back. I could n't never learn to sew, anyhow. I 'll tell yer how it is, — it 's this way: yer take a piece o' cloth, an' yer clap a button onto one side of it, an' then yer go to work an' try to navigate through from t'other side with a needle, an' ef yer don't stave the point off ev'ry single time, I 'll swaller it! Ole lady down to Moose Island, where I come from, done my button-sewing fer years back, an' comes kinder rough on me doing it myself. Jim, he 'd oughter know how to sew, did n't he now? But he don't. I says to him sometimes, 'Jim,' I says, 'yer 'd orter be ashamed, big ez you be an' can't sew!' But don't do no good, only makes him madder 'n a settin' hen. Allus does when I git foul er any o' his lacks. But he 's a good feller, Jim is, on'y he ain't never ben brought up

right. It makes a lot er difference to a feller whether he 's ben brought up."

Friday's critic was spread out at comfortable length in his chair, worrying his fur cap tirelessly as he talked.

"I don't mean that kind o' fetchin' up the big-bugs set out to hev," he explained, warming up to a new idea. "My gracious! there 's one or two houses I go into sometimes, summer folks down to Moose Island, in town for winters. I ben to 'em. I know how they done! Yer can't tell me! Why, I gwin there awhile an' seems ez ef I should gwup thro' the ruf, makes me so deuced oncomfortable. So stan' up an' p'ticler them kind o' folks is, yer can't fetch a step but what yer come down on some er their notions. Good Lord! in some o' them rixtocratic houses yer hev ter split a bean t' eat it. Ef I want sum'n t' eat I druther eat off'n the floor than be so awful slow and mannery. Now, I like to come over here, yer don't hev ter act anyhow.

"Now, I 'll tell yer, did yer ever notice" (balancing his cap on one fist and beating it round and round with the other), "it 's jest this way: sometimes yer hev an awful sight better time when it don't cost nothin' than ye do when it does. That 's what 's the matter. Now I 'll tell yer. I set out to go to Yarmouth on a Sunday, to see my cousin, Maria Collins, an' so I stayed over till Monday. Well, I 'll be blamed ef I ever hed a better time in my life; an' do ye believe, the whole thing did n't cost fifteen cents. Nor I could n't tell yer to save me what I done, only set roun' an' laffed, an' I dunno what I wuz laff'n at. Maria 's a tearer, an' she makes things hum — an' so 's her children. Terrible nice children. I 've ben places where I 'd git rid of fifteen dollars an' wisht all the time I hed n't went. There 's lots o' things you pay for that 's poor investments, I say, — 'specially parties an' presents. Now I 'll tell yer. I went to a party down to Moose Neck, an' me an'

'nother feller, we laid out five dollars for the two of us, an' blamed ef it warn't a clean fizzle. My boots wuz too small, pinched awful, an' there wuz too many girls. Ef there 's one thing I hate, it 's too many girls to a party. An' I hain't went to another party since. An' jest see what I laid out, now, compared to Maria's, an' did n't git no lastin' satisfaction!

"I guess I 'll be goin' now. Jim, he 'll be cussin' an' jawin' an' lookin' out the door ev'ry little while t' see ef I 'm comin', but soon ez I heave in sight under them tower steps, he 'll in an' slam the door, an' make believe not know I 'm roun'. Oh, he 's a sly one, Jim is! Well, good-night; I guess I 'll be goin'. Hope to see you over to my house, some o' these nice nights. Well, I made a visit, hain't I, this time. Ef you stan' up it 's a call, an' ef you set down it 's a visit. Well, I guess I 'll be goin'. Good-night!

"Say! good-night, Beulah! Don't talk

too much! Well, good-night, everybody!"

The kitchen was suddenly lonely and silent. Beulah stood by the window watching, as though she could see Crusoe through the darkness going down that stormy road to the point, feeling round for his boat, and running her down alone into the dark, wild water.

"He won't never git acrost alive!" murmured Mrs. Padelford. Then, presently, "Beulah! did you hear me! I said he would n't never git acrost alive."

Beulah did not speak.

Mrs. Padelford looked up at her sharply over her spectacles and stopped rocking. Then she settled back again and murmured, "I feel like a mother to him. Poor Johnny, so rec'less, so daredevil. He 'll do them kind o' things one time too many — one time too many."

CHAPTER VI

HEART ISLAND

THE parlor blinds were closed, but one row of slats set ajar gave Mrs. Padelford a fair view of passers-by. The window itself was set off from the road by a narrow strip of grass one might easily reach across, to shake hands with some one over the fence.

Mrs. Padelford was keeping a sharp eye on the road that afternoon, for Bion Billings had been seen up town, and there was Avis Priscilla waiting for a chance to go across to the light.

"There ain't no sech a thing as gittin' a holt o' Bion nowadays," said she. "He 's a terrible hand to stick home, an' that little small light o' his. I often says to him, 'It ain't no bigger than a farthin' dip, Bion,'

says I, but he 's terrible regular with it, blow out an' light up jest the same. Ain't never a minute one side the clock or the other. He 's a smart man, Bion is, but he 's kinder drove, 'long of his wife 's bein' laid by so long with her sickness."

Avis was waiting to go across to see her sister, but the little sea between was to be crossed only by Bion's dory. There was no other for a mile up or down shore.

"If you 'd 'a' known you wuz comin' you could 'a' hed him met yer," said Mrs. Padelford. "Or we could 'a' went to the point an' hed him fetched you acrost, but he warn't to home. I guess you better make yourself easy, an' set still till he comes by. There — there he is! That 's him! Hist the winder, Beulah! He 's 'long with the store man's team!"

But Beulah was less nimble than the store man's horse, and Bion was swept from view.

"Well, he warn't goin' towards home, an'

he 's like as not goin' to git the store team to carry some of his stuff down to the beacon for him," said Mrs. Padelford. "An' that 's why he 's ridin' in it. Mebbe he 's got a berril o' flour, or somethin' big to lug, — he hain't ben up for I dunno when. Yes, I guess it 's flour, most likely, only Bion warn't never no gret of an eater himself, an' Eliza Olivia don't never eat, an' specially sence she 's ben down with the — well, I forgit what they call it. I dunno, I 'm sure, where they could 'a' ben goin'. I kinder thought Bion would 'a' stopped in to tell me 'bout Ed. He set a terrible lot by Ed, Bion did, an' he 's ben dead four months now, and he ain't never crossed my doorsill. I did think he 'd 'a' liked some flowers off'n the grave, but I 'll hev 'em all give away if he don't come quick. Bion 's queer, but he 's awful smart an' forehanded. I set a lot by Bion."

Beulah, watching faithfully the turn in the road where the team was to reappear,

overlooked Bion on foot tearing down the road, this time unmistakably bound for home.

Once more the window flew up, and the blinds flew back, and Mrs. Padelford's voice echoed through the square. "Hi! Hello there! Billings! Bion, I say! Avis — Priscilla's — comin' — over!"

But Bion kept on his way, not catching the gist of the call, but answering cheerily to be down at the beacon, five o'clock, and was gone again.

"Well, for pity's sake," said Mrs. Padelford. "Anybody 'd think didn't nobody hev no business to tend to, only him! Well, you 'll hev to go to work an' wait a while longer, Avis. 'T aint no use chasin' him, an' he 'll hev to build a new lighthouse an' set up housekeepin' again 'fore five o'clock. He could n't live if he did n't kill himself." And Mrs. Padelford told Avis all about Ed till half past four.

It might have been an inland town they

walked through, but there was a dull sound of surf not far away, and a smell of salt in the air. And between the quaint, crowded houses in the square there was a glimpse of shipping down below. A dusty country road stretched away before them, bordered with scattered farmhouses close to the street, with tidy yards hemmed in by neat white fences and bright with flowers. Meadows and rocky pastures lay beyond the town. And then rockier pastures, with a rough path leading away from the road, bringing sudden vision of the sea, a broad blue bay with woodland opposite, half hiding a town, and the small, white lighthouse on Heart Island standing clear against the blue.

Wherever wild flowers could find root-room, along the rocky way, they crowded one another for blooming-space, — herb-robert, hawthorn, bayberry bushes, blueberry, buttercups, whiteweed and island upon island of bluets. As far as the path led, down among sea-worn boulders to the edge of the tide, bluets grew.

"Did you holler upstairs to hev Aunt Rebecca keep her eye on my beans in the oven, Beulah?" Mrs. Padelford puffed, clambering over the rocks, alternately scanning the island for glimpses of Bion, and fretfully regarding the sinking sun.

"Lord! Where do s'pose he 's got to, not to be here when we be! He won't no more 'n git over 'n' back 'fore lightin'-up time!" Mrs. Padelford was waving her handkerchief with one hand and with the other clinging to the iron bar of the beacon, oblivious of the pitiful lines on it in memory of some one lost there. She knew all that long ago, and her business just now was with the living and not with the dead. "I declare to goodness if I don't see him comin', and time it wuz, I should say!"

Bion, afar off, shaded his eyes and looked across to the beacon, flashed into the house and out again, running to the boathouse, followed at a distance by Eliza Olivia, toiling eagerly and slowly along the rocky island way to the shore.

Heart Island was a bit of the shore rocks, set off from them by a narrow, deep chasm. The tide was full, and a big sloop that came darkling down from the west, passing slowly through, quite shut out Heart Island with its big mainsail, sailing silently out into the bay. And behold Bion already halfway over.

"I seen you, Avis!" he shouted up, "from the back door! Why didn't you folks stop me goin' by, and I 'd fetched you over noontime? Terrible glad to see you, Avis!" he shouted, rowing fast. "How be ye? I fetched the doctor to wife, and fetched him back acrost since I see you, Mis' Padelford. Godfrey! I 've hed my hands full last two hours!"

"You shut up, Bion," said Mrs. Padelford, "an' jest say where you 're goin' ter land with that boat. I ain't goin' to climb from Bayside to Muckentuck a-chasin' you, an' don't you talk so much," she added, pleasantly.

Bion gave Avis a horny, hearty hand, and helped her tenderly into the boat. Mrs. Padelford and Beulah helped themselves in with familiar quickness, and Bion labored cheerily across again, with his heavy load, talking fast.

"Doctor says wife ain't no worse, an' I tell her, says I, 'Eliza Olivia,' says I, 'you ain't doin' the fair thing by me,' says I. 'Here 's the doctor comes over an' charges me three dollars for every single visit,' says I, 'an' I vow ef I should n't think you 'd act jest a leetle mite sick jest to save the money,' says I. He 's ben a-doctorin' her eight months now an' he hain't killed her yet. No, you need n't feel bad, you know me, don't yer, ole girl! I 'm the same ole fool I allus wuz. I say a pile, but I don't mean nothin'. I ain't only a rough ole bugger. Godfrey! Eliza Olivia an' me, we ben married fifteen years, come day after tomorrer, an' I hain't went away from her a day, nor her from me. Ef anythin' wuz to

happen to wife, I — I dunno as I 'd be on top the ground long m'self. Godfrey ! "

Eliza Olivia had toiled all the long way to the little white boathouse at the top of the rocks opposite, white and worn, for Avis. She put her arms around her neck when she came, and they two walked back to the house alone.

Bion cleared his throat and hauled the boat up the ways; then he followed along after with Mrs. Padelford and Beulah.

" Eliza Olivia, — poor wife, she don't weigh for much," he said, gazing after her fondly.

" Doos look peekid," said Mrs. Padelford.

" Haint ben ashore for nine months," he said. And " ashore " was only across the chasm.

" Yes, I took them young head of cattle to pastur' 'long o' my own," said Bion, filling the evening air with his vigorous voice. " Then there 's my hens, an' my wife's father livin' long of us now, an' my lighthouse,

an' cows to milk, an' doctor to fetch an' carry, an' used up two whole barrels of lime on my place this spring a'ready, an' not done yet. An' I got my house ter paint inside an' outside, six rooms, an' I can't do nothin' to inside till wife's gone ashore, 'count of the turpentine smell not agreein' with her stomach. An' so I 'm most crazy, fust an' last. Now — Mis' Padelford, if you 'll excuse me, I 'll step round an' milk, ef you 'll make yerself ter home, an' I 'll put yer up a can o' milk to take home when yer go, an' some aigs. But you stay to supper. I 'll come in an' git supper quick as I milk. I would n't 'a' ben so turrible drove this afternoon on'y fer doctor's comin' over, an' goin' ter town to-day, an' my whitewashin'. An' the housework takes a lot o' time, wife not bein' able ter lay finger ter nothin'; an' nussin' wife, too, that takes time; an' Lord, I wisht there warn't no twelve hours night took out of the day. My gracious, ef I hed the time

the dark takes I could git that south fence whitewashed this week. Well, you make yerselves to home, and I 'll step 'round and milk."

In Bion's little world the day's life was never long enough for all the day brought to do. Presently the light shone out from the tiny tower. Bion's brimming milk pails stood at the foot, with two sleek cats lapping the froth while he raced with the clock and the sunset to get his light going. The silver star set securely in its earthly sky, Bion routed the cats, caught up his pail, and fled to get supper for his guests.

As the night shut down, Mrs. Padelford and Beulah were ferried across to their own world once more, and Bion sat down on the beach with Eliza and Avis, watching the tide fall, and Avis told them the story.

CHAPTER VII

AVIS PRISCILLA

"It wuz allus jest so when I felt bad. I hed ter go ou'doors. An' so when I heard of it, I hed to put my things on an' go out. I 'd 'a' died ef I hed n't. Did n't hev nowheres to go except to go out, so I did. Sister follered me fur 's the door, an' said not to fergit it was riz bread night, an' I jest said back ter set the dry hop. I 'd 'a' died ter set still. An' I walked an' walked. I do'no where, on'y seems I crossed the bridge two or three times, an' I must 'a' ben out a couple o' hours. It wuz Japan where he wuz, an' five hundred of 'em on the ships died down tergether, an' Ben, the newspaper said, an' 't wuz the black vomit. It 's awful to die of, an' sudden. An' I

walked an' walked, an' kep' a-thinkin' ef I could jest stop an' put my mind on it an' git right hold of it, I 'd feel better. An' I would n't 'a' minded feelin' worse ef I could 'a' felt better an' kinder got hold on things round. But I did n't darst to let myself stop walkin', 'cause I 'd 'a' known then what wuz hurtin' me inside, an' pushin' on me an' chokin' me.

"But bimeby my feet would n't foller no longer, an' I hed to lie down side the road. Then somethin' come to me quick, an' shook my heart an' beat in my head, an' I seen what I orter do, clear. An' I called 'Willyum, Willyum!' quick, an' I jumped up an' ran an' ran to find Willyum: an' bimeby I seen a light down the road, an' I heard a barn door shut long ways off, and dogs, an' I seen I wuz right near Willyum's house that minute. An' I ran an' ran, fear I 'd fall 'fore I got there, or lose my hold on it; for I seen my duty now, an' I wuz scared, fear I 'd feel what hurt inside 'fore

I got it done. I never stopped till I grabbed Willyum's hand where he wuz bendin' over the fire, thinkin', when I come in an' told him I would.

"He looked up so beautiful an' glad at first I covered up my eyes, an' then he tore my hands down, an' stared at me so white an' struck I shivered down before him; but I seen the look come in his eyes that minute that never wuz gone again till the day he died. He said did I mean it, true, an' wuz I marryin' him now, he'd waited so long wantin' me, because he wuz dyin'? An' I said no, no, it wuz n't that. An' then he said sharp an' sudden to me, he says, 'Avis, is there another man you love more 'n me?' An' then I bowed against his shoulder an' cried, an' said 'Oh, no, — no, there wuz n't no other man.' But I never knew why he hed the sad look in his eyes. 'Cause he could n't never hev heard nor dreamed of Ben. There warn't no way before we wuz married, an' I could n't never feel to tell him. I hope I done my duty.

"He said I wuz the best wife in all the world. I nursed him those six months the best I knew. He wuz far too good fer me, Willyum wuz. But I would n't let the sorrer git right hold o' me. Some days seemed I 'd die, but Willyum never mistrusted. He could n't. He hed n't never heard o' Ben. I hope I done my duty. He said there wuz n't another woman in the world could put hot water on his headaches like me. He said they would n't hev the water hot. But there wuz a lot of other things he used to praise me for, though they wuz small to do, an' him so sick, an' so feelin', an' fond o' me. I could n't never talk much, but I know he never knew I hed a sorrer I wuz keepin' hid. I hope I done my duty.

"I on'y seen Ben that once when I wuz down to his aunt's in Barnstable jest after Willyum an' me wuz engaged. He jest stood up an' took my hand when his aunt spoke our names t' introduce, but 't wuz all

we ever needed, to know we belonged. He went out, an' we never seen each other. But we wuz man an' wife if ever could be, an' we both knew. He wrote me a letter once or twice, an' once I wrote him back. An' two years after I heard of him dyin'. Willyum wuz waitin' fer me to say 'yes' ter be married, an' I hed given him my word. I could n't take it back. An' Ben went to sea. Willyum used ter say how pretty I wuz, an' I wuz glad to be pretty fer him, an' times he 'd try to make me smile. He 'd foller me round with his eyes, layin' there at the last, an' then he 'd say, so wistful an' so fond of me, he 'd say, 'Avis, if ye 'd ever smile, ye 'd turn a king's head;' that 's what he said, him thinkin' me so pretty. He did love me, Willyum did, an' never found a breath of fault with me ter the last.

"I ben workin' in a fur factory sence he died. The ole pushin' come back down on me when I did n't hev Willyum to do fer.

An' I hed to go somewheres. I come away last week, an' I 'm goin' down to Barnstable openin' scallops. There 's women wanted on the wharf, an' his aunt 's down there. She says she 's heard he did n't never die. She thinks he 'll come back. She wrote me up to the fur factory last week. Openin' 's pretty hard on the han's. Fur an' fish both is. But I kind o' want to be ou'doors, an' down to Barnstable 's near the sea."

CHAPTER VIII

A CARETAKER

"You can't fetch a step in this town 'thout ev'rybody knows it," said Mrs. Ben, coming in out of the storm, and standing all snowy on the inside door-mat, while Mrs. Crow disappeared to get the asked-for cup of yeast. "No, I hain't a-goin' to set, I hain't a-goin' to stop," she continued, directing her voice toward the pantry; "I dunno when I 've ben out o' yeast before, an' now I s'pose the whole town 'll know I come here a-borrowin' of ye. Why, jest now, on'y last week, I was over to Boston gittin' me a pair new boots, — shoes they was, — Samson's is so dreadful poor an' high, an' so, well, I went up 'long the street 'fore seven o'clock, so 's nobody would n't see me,

with a basket to the depot; an' the post-master, course he seen me, an' he called to me length the street, 'Goin' away?' says he, an' the butcher too, he did. I did hope t' the Lord I'd git by Ann Elizer's 'thout her seein' me, an' sure enough, she stood back t' the window when I cut past. But 'fore I was out o' hearin' I seen her throw up the window an' holler after me. Folks is so dreadful curious. Now I hain't a mite that way myself. I dunno half nobody's business in this town except my own, an' 't ain't 'cause I don't hev opportunities, if I say so as had n't ought to. Bless my soul! What 's that?" she exclaimed, opening the door a crack, peering and listening through the fine sleet falling; "The Methodists' straw ride! I do declare!"

A long pung creaked into view from the four corners, with slow horses, big bells clanging, and a crowded party of villagers. Presently the high notes of a cornet sounded, "Onward! Christian soldiers, marching as to war!"

"My land alive!" cried Mrs. Ben, closing the crack to a line as they passed near, but listening a minute still as the sound swept by, full and sweet, and died away faintly, "on to war!"

"It's them Methodists goin' over to Barry. I should think they'd be ashamed. It's three weeks runnin' they ben over to Barry of a Friday evenin', an' their own prayer-meetin' night, too, not countin' Tuesdays, when they've went considerable, to my truth and knowledge," said Mrs. Ben, still standing on the door-mat, and covering the yeast-cup with her hand to keep the snow out going home. "But I can't stop a minute now. I on'y say it's a livin' shame leavin' Nathaniel Tewksbury's meetin' an' gaddin'. 'T ain't nothin' else. Them young women out'n the choir, an' the men, an' the cornet jest gaddin' after that Elder. I'm ashamed of 'em. Comin' here with his pomposity an' his whiskers, an' his cheeks gittin' fatter ev'ry week — the way the

women cooked him up one mess o' food an' 'nother 'cause he said he was pindlin' when he come here. And prayin' ev'ry night into the vestry, an' callin' it revivals when it warn't only bluster an' cry with mor'n half the women folks, an' only seven men saved from everlastin' perdition in five weeks, an' him livin' round on the parish like a porpoise. He made me mad to see him. 'He 's a good man an' all that,' says Mr. Tewksbury to me, when I fuss at his ways o' doin', an' speakin' ill o' him behind his back, which I told Mr. Tewksbury plum straight I 'd as lief say to his face, an' him so patient an' forbearin' with me if I hain't only his housekeeper, an' no kith nor kin. 'He 's a good man,' says Mr. T., quiet an' firm, 'on'y the Lord he leads him in ways what I don't take after myself,' an' like o' that, 'n' I know fer truth an' knowledge of the Elder's tryin' to pervert folks right out of our meetin'-house into hisn. An' now I guess I 'll be goin'. On'y I do like some

kinds o' ministers better than others, an' I allus hold by Mr. Tewksbury's doctrine an' preachin' an' house-to-house visitin', an' that 's a fact. He 's jest the kind o' minister I do like, if he is so grave, an' gray whiskers, an' thin. I 've heard folks time an' agin complain an' say he comes right into yer house an' talks 'bout what yer doin' an' not a mite o' religion. I hate a man comes right in an' gits down on his knees prayin' whether anybody wants to or not. An' he 's an awful good scholar, too, an' fer 's I can make out, the whole of his doctrine is mostly not goin' to church an' comin' home fightin', an' kinder let yer Sunday sift down slow an' last yer the week out. An' so he does. He 's a beautiful hand to pray 'n all, but he 's a great hand to live. He believes in livin'. So do I. I 've often told my husband he must 'a' ben a thousand-dollar man where he come from, but we don't give him but five hundred an' a donation party. An' he 's terri-

ble close 'bout where he come from, too, an' on'y that one little boy. I 've often said to him, as feelin' as I could, 'Was your wife's health mostly pretty good 'fore she died?' An' he 's thanked me an' said it mostly was, an' gone away. He 's awful good to the poor. He 'll take right holt an' help a poor man cook a meal o' victuals, an' he sawed ole Jonson up a load of wood once when he was sick abed, an' give him his dinner, an' carried it over, an' when he was goin' off 'thout prayin', — Jonson 's a Methodis', you know, — Jonson, he looked so expectin' an' disappointed, Mr. Tewksbury, he says, 'It 's all right, Charlie; you eat your dinner while it 's hot, an' I 'll be prayin' 'long home,' says he. He 's real good ev'ry which way. But ev'rybody don't see as I do, an' I 'm free to say he don't seem to be so sought after as he might be, an' his numbers ain't increasin'. Husband said he 's too good for 'em, but I dunno. It 's all a mix to me — them as is better than others

not risin' 'cordin' to their quality. Why, I know some folks don't like a minister takin' the clo'es off the line fer his wife, with a big fam'ly to wash fer, an' no girl in the kitchen, an' I 'm terrible careful not to let Mr. Tewksbury lay finger to my wash, to save scandal, not that he 's ever made as if he was goin' to, but I 've hed my answer polite an' ready on wash-days, fearin' he might. Some folks is dreadful particular 'bout their pastors. But I dunno yet but what Mr. Tewksbury will add to the roll in time. I dunno when we hain't hed a conversion before in ages till old Jonson was took in, an' I 've heard there 's others meditatin'. I 'm expectin' Easter will wake 'em up some. But it does make me ache, his goin' down, snowy night like this, clear to the vestry, an' sittin' lookin' so religious an' pleasant to them empty benches, an' on'y them ole folks there, an' all the young ones gone after that cornet. I wisht they 'd kep' his house fer him like me, an' seen his ins an'

outs, week through. But I tell him it 'll come his time soon, an' them as went after the cornet these days will get their hearts touched an' shook, an' stay to the vestry Fridays. I wisht they could jest see his lovin' ways with Philly. Jest how he — well, I guess I must be goin'. Good-bye."

Thus did Mrs. Ben take news of Mr. Tewksbury's inner goodness with her wherever she went, and there was always an open ear for the minister's "housekeeper." To Methodist friends she spoke with grieved surprise of their "goin's on;" to her church associates she poured forth a stream of pastor praise, varied and enriched by incidents of everyday goodness as the week went by. The leaven worked. The vestry showed it. But the Elder at Barry was unconsciously helping Mrs. Ben. The Rockhaven deserters, coming diligently on successive Tuesdays and Fridays through the month following the Rockhaven revival, heard sermons from Elder Plum that had an oblique effect. The

crude teaching rose, in inspired moments, to earnest, impressive charge and warning. This was when the Elder talked of "folds" and our "ministerial privileges in our midst." Thus it came to pass that Emily Baker, cornet, refused to leave a certain Friday-night prayer-meeting at her own church, and, the leader gone, the sleighing party broke up, giving up Barry, and in place of it going to church again or not, as might be, but bringing withal sufficient signs of "warnin'" to gladden Mrs. Ben's Friday-night heart. As the minister's housekeeper, she kept a pious eye on backsliders returning, possessing them with a glance as they entered, offering them at once to the Lord in prayer in all simplicity and goodness of heart, as proof of Mr. Tewksbury's rising ability and pastoral worth.

A proof of further "warnin's" was the widened sympathy for what was respectfully referred to as the pastor's "back troubles," so often dwelt upon by Mrs. Ben, and so

called in distinction from those of later date, — an interest that showed itself in numerous invitations to tea, and "bring Philly," from the more warm-hearted members of the pastor's circle.

The startling news of an accident to Philly, a hurt spine and his life in danger, called out fresh sympathy, and created a disposition to praise the stricken pastor, — not alone for his goodness now, but for his ability also, now newly believed in. In those weeks when he nursed Philly, refusing all offers to "spell" him, sitting all day and all night by the child's bed, except for the few hours at church, his people heard in his sermons something that stirred them deeply. Mrs. Ben said that folks was "meditatin'."

On the Sunday before Christmas several were waiting to be received into the church. The pastor read these names: "Miss Emily Baker, Mr. Moses Jones, Mrs. Baker, and Mehitable Baker."

"The Lord 's struck them Bakerses!" exclaimed Mrs. Ben, with solemn joy.

On New Year's Eve a messenger brought word to the parsonage that Miss Baker's class — Philly's class — would like to bring a few little gifts on New Year's morning. Philly would see the boys pass the window. They would be very quiet, and would lay the packages on the window-sill outside.

That night the doctor's word spread through the village that Philly's New Year would be the end.

CHAPTER IX

PHILLY

A DIM, shaded night-light burned outside the pastor's study door, shining faintly in across Philly's bed.

"Father?" anxiously.

"Yes, my boy."

"Oh — father!"

"Yes."

"I 'm so tired."

"Yes, pet, I know. Try to lie still; try hard, little man." A long silence.

"I 'm trying, father."

"My good boy." A longer silence.

"O father, father!"

"I know, sonny, I know." The little head tossed to and fro on the pillow.

"Father dear!" starting.

"I 'm here, Philly."

"Hold my hand hard — there, like that, father."

"Yes, pet."

"Father?" suddenly.

"Yes, my dear."

"You won't let go my hand!"

"No." Silence.

"Did he say I 'd be well in — in twenty-four hours, father?"

"He said you 'd be better, my boy."

"Very better?"

"More easy, I know."

"Will it be twenty-four hours to-morrow morning since to-day, father?"

"Very nearly, sonny. Now try to go to sleep."

A moan, a sob — then more sobs through shut teeth.

"He — he said I was a general, d-did n't he, father?"

"Yes, my boy, and a hero, too."

"I 'd rather be a general. O father, father!" tears raining down.

"I know, I know, pet."

"I 'm — so — tired."

"Yes, pet; but it will soon be morning."

"Father?" anxiously. "Don't go away."

"No, dear."

"Oh, don't take your hand off my forehead, father darling!"

"No, sonny." A long pause, then faintly, "Sing, my one."

"When he com-eth,
When he com-eth,
To — make up His jewels."

The song sounded strange in the winter midnight.

"Like the stars of the morning,"

a little voice, broken with tears, was singing, too.

"They shall shine in their glory" —

The little voice fell to a moan. "O father, dear!" The singer was silent.

"Don't sing it any more, father darling!"

. . . . . .

A little company of boys coming two by two down the lane on New Year's morning lingered uncertainly a long way off, then gathered in a whispering group round the pastor's gate. The pastor was at the window, holding Philly, and beckoned them in.

"Say 'Happy New Year,' fellers," whispered their leader, "'cause he dunno he 's awful sick, don't you see; an' say it loud right through the winder, so he 'll hear good."

The boys crowded forward up the steps, hugging their packages awkwardly, and gazing awestricken at Philly's white face behind the pane. One by one they laid their gifts on the sill, with quavering greeting, in sorrow and great awe. Little Tommy Dan, last and least of all, stood on tiptoe under the window, with bright greeting ready, and only said: —

"G-good-bye, Philly."

CHAPTER X

A RADICAL

"HIM an' me wuz hevin' it over on pol'-tics an' religion," said Captain Gibson. "I used to set up with him nights some, when it come his watch in the tower, eight ter twelve. She 'd be a grindin' roun' up top, two ter the minute on the quicksilver, smooth as silk, the ole lens, — an' the machinery, down where he was, no particular objection to talkin', so we hed it over 'bout them ole Bible dorgmas. Sam he 'd take a turn on the gallery frum time to time 'count of mebbe fog shuttin' down, but we wuz pretty still fer the most part, hevin' it over. He 's a gret scholar, Sam is. I 'm proud of Sam. He knows a lot more 'n I do. But I says to him right out plain, says I, 'Capt'n An-

derson, says I, 'you 're a younger man than what I be,' — I don't believe he ain't more 'n sixty-five an' odd, ef he is a day, — 'an' you 'll come to look at these things diffrent,' says I. 'T ain't because he don't read a lot that he come to be so misguided, but I guess he sorter keeps readin' the same things right over an' over, like. Now I says to him square to the face, an' kind, I says, 'Now take the Garden of Eden, Capt'n Anderson,' says I; 'how does that set on your stomach?' says I. But Sam don't hear to reasons easy, an' I kinder give him up after I 'd ben at him a spell. I told him science was agin him, but he jest did n't appear to care a mite. 'I got my Bible,' he says over and over, kinder wearisome. Now I tell you I respect a pig-headed cuss like Capt'n Anderson. I dunno what he calls himself as a congregation, so to speak. Prob'ly Presberterian, like 's not. But he 's twenty miles frum a meetin'-house an' lowed he might be kinder

short of up-to-date 'long of not hevin' went to church fer some years back. But Sam he 'll allus be the same bloomin' radical, — I believe that 's what they call them kind, reg'lar ole hard-shell Bible folks. He calls me a ninferdel. But I ain't! Lord, no! no, I ain't thet fer down. Only 'course I don't believe nothin' in the Bible. Lord, no! Godfrey!

"It comes kinder hard on me, — the way he thinks I 'm goin' ter hell. I 'd kinder like hevin' him feel we was goin' to git ashore same place, so to speak. Well, when I was comin' off that time I shook hands with him longer 'n common, an' I says to him, goin' away, I says, 'Ole boy,' I says, 'you an' me thinks diff'rent, but that 's all right,' I says. 'I ain't sure but what there is a heaven, but I know there ain't no hell. So you an' me 'll meet again, Sam, ef I leave Hawkport fer the findin'-out, Sam, 'fore you do.' "

CHAPTER XI

ILLNESS AT IVYWYND

Captain Bunce's bed stood in a corner of the darkened parlor.

"I've laid here nine weeks come next Friday afternoon," said the captain feebly, folding his white hands on the counterpane. "Look at them hands! Pretty, eh?" he cackled. "Doctor — says — he —"

"Says he never see sech a case o' typhoid," his wife struck in brightly. "Did n't sleep a wink fer seventeen days an' nights, him nor me, an' me up with him the whole time, 'cause he would n't be nussed by nobody on'y me. Would n't take so much as a spoonful o' meat or drink 'thout me givin' it him, perticularly drink. He wuz terrible queer 'bout all his liquids, an' he ain't hed

mostly nothin' else. I 'm most wore out. An' him. Poor 'Lias! An' he never hed a day's sickness 'fore in his whole life, an' so it come hard on him, an' we could n't git no washin' done, an' I hed his bed moved ri' down here handy to the kitchen."

The captain's wife was sitting carefully on her apron turned front to back on the middle of the fat blue velvet sofa.

"An' so near the harbor-boats I declare to goodness I dunno how he 's ever stood it listenin', he 's kep' on so in his delirium. When he wuz out of his head, you know fogs we 've hed in his sickness seems like we never did hev before, an' a-screechin' an' tootin', an' kep' his boat in his mind when like as not it would 'a' stayed there fast enough 'thout no help. Poor 'Lias! He hain't ben off'n his steamer a day sence she wuz launched; an' so he 'd set up in bed in his delirium an' holler, O my Lord! I 'll never forgit it, him hollerin'. An' so weak with the typhoid! He 'd holler to hard a

port yer hellum, an' then flop over as weak as a kitten. Terrible queer ideas folks has with the typhoid. Captain Low, he died of the typhoid, captain of the Sara Maria Pipperton, an' his wife wuz a-tellin' me an' cryin' all the time, — recollectin' of it seemed to fret her somehow, kinder make her feel bad, — an' she wuz a-sayin' how the captain wuz a-fumblin' roun' the bed all them last days o' hisn after dollar an' a half, under the piller an' bedclo'es after thet dollar 'n' a half seems he 'd lost mebbe, or owed ter somebody 'fore he come down or somethin'. But it wuz boats mostly with 'Lias. Poor 'Lias!"

"Thet woman o' mine, she 's a — wonderful — woman," murmured the captain.

"O Lord, no, 'Lias!"

"Yes, you be, dear," he persisted, weak and fond. "You done all the work."

"Lord! no, 'Lias, I ain't done no work; I on'y cooked the vittles."

CHAPTER XII

WHITE LAYLOCKS

"My land o' liberty, Eliza Olivia! You ain't got yer dinner dishes done up yet! Well, I come 'crost to the island with the cow-man, lookin' over them young things in the far pastur', in his dory, an' so I kinder come in sudden. Mr. Tewksbury 's takin' tea over to Mis' Padelford's. I 'll set down a spell. Where 's yer husband? Well, you do hev an elegant view over shore ways, now, I declare to goodness. See my house, can't yer! Well, I never! I suppose you see what a washin' I hed out this mornin'! You did n't? I want to know! Ain't that too bad! Why, I hed my new sheets out, an' all my white spring sewin', an' them jean jumpers I made the minister out of

a tissue paper pattern I got into Boston. Why, my land, Eliza! I hed four lines full an' a grass layout, an' used up every single clo'es-peg I got to my name. I 'm real kinder sorry you hain't seen 'em. I would n't 'a' took 'em in 'fore dinner ef I 'd 'a' known you 'd 'a' liked to look at 'em, Eliza Olivia, of course."

"You 're real nice to favor me, Lucy, but I could n't never of seen 'em 'thout I 'd went ou'doors. They 's laylocks front the sink-room window. I kep' a-thinkin' of it, but I did n't git no chance to go ou'doors. I can't really git down steps 'thout husband, an' I wuz hopin' he 'd git back 'fore you took 'em in, Lucy. I s'pose you hain't got no place else you could hang your clo'es, Lucy?"

"Oh, my gracious, I guess I hain't. My first husband set them clo'es-posts when we wuz first married, an' I hain't felt to change 'em. I dunno ez I could ever come to see my way to hang my clo'es anywheres else."

"An' you allus hang 'em so handsome, Lucy!"

"Well, I reckon I do, ef I do say it ez hed n't ought to. I 'm terrible perticular 'bout hangin's out. Mis' Bunce allus says so. Says she, 'Lucy,' says she, 'my sheets is some bigger 'n what yourn be, but I ain't no sech hand a-hangin' of 'em out,' says she. An' that 's jest about how 't is. Why, now you would n't believe it — I 've took a kinder walk round wash days, ez ef I wuz jest goin' fer an errand, up one street an' down another, lookin' at lines, an' my land alive, there warn't four to six sheets in the whole village what warn't a leetle mite crooked! Oh, I 've got an eye! Yes, indeed! My first husband allus 'lowed I 'd got an eye. A straight eye, they call it. Of course you 've got to 'low for help. Help never does hang out good. An' houses where they keep help or hez washin' done for 'em, of course I don't lay it up against a person if their wash ain't hung

good. Some hez notions 'bout stockin's, now. Some 's sot on toes an' some on tops. I allus hold to tops. Mis' Bunce, now, she stretches her toes ev'ry single time she pegs by 'em. Ev'ry Monday up goes them toes, an' not meanin' no disrespect to Mis' Bunce, I call it real pig-headedness, an' I said so to the minister this mornin', ef she is his aunt on his father's side. But Mr. Tewksbury, he 's all fer peace an' quiet, an' it 's real hard to hev a real up an' down conversation with him 'bout anybody. I hed my flannels out, too, Eliza, this mornin'."

"You don't say so! I do wisht I hed an idee when you wuz goin' to, Lucy!"

"Once in the spring, an' once in the fall, all out to once, when we take 'em off fer good. All other times, of course there ain't but one set of a time out, when the minister changes, an' I do, him one week an' me the next, so 's not to make the wash too heavy."

"You allus wuz sech an elegant hand to manage!"

"Yes, indeed! Lord! I guess I be! An' the minister an' me changin' into summer ones of a Decoration Day allus, I git a good bleachin' time fer flannels 'fore hot weather comes. An' git 'em laid down in camphire, nice, in the back attic. There 's a sight of things to look after in this world, when you think how you might be took off any minute, an' the Lord would n't wait fer yer then, no sir! to fix yer winter flannels away frum the moths. I allus live ez if I wuz ter pass away the next minute. It 's the only way in the world to keep your work in hand decent. You hain't hed no new white sewing yerself, hev yer, Eliza? Ain't that too bad! Mary Jane ain't neither. Not none that I could sight frum so fer off. They wuz some piller cases might 'a' ben new unbleached, an' then again they might 'a' ben yaller frum layin' over. A clo'esline tells a lot. Reclect that pink calico skirt on yourn when your niece's folks wuz over once frum campmeetin', an' done their washin'?"

"So they did! You got an elegant memory, Lucy! Much ez five years back, ain't it?"

"I can't say to the day, of course, but I says to myself, 'Eliza Olivia 's got company, sure 's the world! She ain't never wore pink, nor stripid, an' she ain't goin' to begin now, at thirty-nine.' Or was it thirty-seven? Seven an' nine allus did bother me, frum a child. Well, so I guess I 'll be goin'. I got to git back 'crost with that cow-man, an' so good-bye, Eliza; I do hope you 'll git over my way soon 's ever you kin walk or be kerried."

Lucy was such a manager! and so forehanded! and such a comfort to the minister! and so strong on her feet! Eliza Olivia watched her from the door, and presently she was gone, and the afternoon quiet lay deep again over the fair little island.

The lilac bushes stood so thick against the sink-room window they really darkened it. Why had n't she noticed it before?

Some could be spared. Eliza Olivia peered through them.

"And then I could see her clo'esline!" she cried to herself, joyfully. "Bion 'll do it for me, he will! An' the rhubob would grow a lot better under 'em, hevin' sunlight. I do wisht Bion would come!" Eliza Olivia went to the door and looked across to shore, and wistfully down the steps. "I could look them laylocks over frum outside ef — ef I" — Eliza Olivia reached down for the next step, and then drew back her foot.

"Best wait for Bion," she said. "I wisht I 'd seen whether she pegged them jumpers by the neck or the ban'. An' I never ast her whether her new ni'gown wuz yoke or full. You can't see clo'es, on yer, nor nobody else, nor in yer hand, like on a clo'esline. Bion 'll fix 'em for me! I won't hev him touch the white kind, of course. Mother set a lot by 'em when she kep' the light. I don't care nothin' fer the

blue, nothin' pertic'lar — well, not a great deal. Bein' they 're out o' bloom now, dear me suz, dunno as we kin tell white from blue, anyway. But Bion knows! He 'll fix it! An' the outside branches does drip dreadful in a rainy spell."

"Sure!" said Bion. "Cut down the gov'ment tower fer ye, ef ye say so! Now where 'll I begin?"

Eliza Olivia looked through the sink-room window with shining eyes, and Bion hacked away a bough here and hacked away a bough there, letting the sunset light into the heart of the clump. Eliza Olivia tapped on the pane.

"Careful of the white laylocks, Bion! There — that 'll do! *That 'll do!*" And she rapped hard again, but too late to save one big bough that came swishing down. Bion came to the door, then, and lifted Eliza Olivia down the steps, and she crept round the corner of the house clinging to

his arm, and they stood off a way, looking at the bushes.

"Ye ain't goin' to feel bad, be ye, dear?" she said.

"Oh Lord, no," said Bion, clearing his throat. "Take more 'n that to lay me out, I take it. Got 'em kinder the way you like 'em, wife? Light yer sink up good?"

"I — I 'm kinder 'fraid it 's cut into mother's part, some, Bion, ain't yew? I 'd hate to touch mother's — them white laylocks — so hard tellin', now they ain't bloomed out."

"Oh Lord no! Mother's wuz on the north side, Olivia, — the south side I mean, of course. Oh Lord, no! Bless ye! Them laylocks is jest as good as they ever wuz! Kinder light up yer sink good — now — er — think?"

CHAPTER XIII

THE HAT OF HIS PRIDE

"Ain't you kinder 'fraid you 'll spot it, John?" said Mrs. Jordan, out of the blue smoke of breakfast-getting, resting the hand that held the fork on the hand that held the knife. "Don't it look a leetle mite like rain? I dunno as I 'd wear my stovepipe myself, John, comin' on rain."

John stood in sight at the bureau in the kitchen bedroom, buttoning his collar in pain and distress. He was the first "fourth assistant" lightkeeper in Mrs. Jordan's day who had a stovepipe to consider, and having missed it altogether out of her own domestic experience she mothered John's with irksome tenderness. John said things in the bedroom, and presently came to breakfast

with the treasure mounted tight on his head. Mr. Jordan was down cleaning off the fog-horn, and you could do as you liked when the principal keeper was gone.

"You do jest as you think best, John," said Mrs. Jordan, laying before the hat an admiring and generous serving of fish. "Maria! comb yer head further off'n the table! You look real nice, John."

John whistled down to the beach, ran his dory down bow first, and loaded in a wheelbarrow, piling up on it his best top-coat and undercoat and vest, fish-boots for the possible wet journey back, and last of all, tucked in under the tails of the coat, rode the silk hat itself. A run and a shove, and the dory was afloat, with John leaping easily to the oars over the hurdle he had raised. A mile across the channel to Grover's Cove, and two miles with the wheelbarrow to town, — John knew it all by heart the season round, the rugged road up from shore and the uncertain sea that lay between the shore and

his light. This day he flew up the rocky road blithely, his heart particularly hurrying his feet, and the hat of his pride riding high on the back of his head.

"Why, sonny!" cried mother Padelford, as he came bounding into the kitchen. "You got it on, ain't ye! How does it seem to do?"

"Hotter 'n smokin' oakum, comin' up," he remarked, preferring to let the ornament speak for itself as he struck an attitude, then squaring his elbows to lift it off, while Mrs. Padelford hastened to rub off a corner of the table before the hat came down.

"Why, sonny, you 're gettin' real dressy, I do declare, an' while I think of it, you'd better get ye another dicky, John. One ain't enough fer a young man so dressy as you be, an' I feel like an own mother to ye, John, an' 't ain't allus I hev a flatiron hot jest when ye want yer dicky done up, sonny. Wuz yer goin' anywheres in pertic'lar today in yer stovepipe, Johnny?"

"Damn the old gal," said John, "she hurts my head anyways I set her. Last time I wuz up with her I says, 'Devil take the old fishkettle,' I says, 'I 'll make her fit,' I says, 'or I 'll smash her,' says I, so I kep' on a fetchin' her up town. Hit her a kite with the oar comin' over, an' like to accidental busted her, but I guess she 'll weather it. Ole gal 'll get her sea legs on bimebye, sailin' 'long o' me. I 'm thinkin' some o' gittin' me a hoss come next pay day. Git kinder het up drivin' the wheelbarrer so fer, an' fetchin' the ole gal 'long."

And feeling calmer he rose to go, shook out his plaid trousers legs, smoothed down his red spotted vest, put on his coat, and was complete. Mrs. Padelford brought his necktie bow round to the front and declared he looked fit to get married.

"Ain't yer toein' in more 'n common, John?" she asked anxiously, as she drew off to get him in perspective. "For good-

ness' sake," she added, "ef I ain't went an' pressed them pants legs out o' plumb! Dear me suz! Can't yer jest wait an' set awhile in the spare chamber, John, whilst I go over 'em a little mite, John, an' git 'em kinder more up an' down, sonny? Ef you warn't so awful tall I dunno as 't would show so terrible. Well, ef ye be in sech a hurry, John, jest keep in mind to kinder step wide right an' left an' I dunno as nobody would mistrust anythin' wuz wrong, sonny. Well, good-bye. Step wide."

"That's a bully topper, John 's got," said Ethan Benedict, coming in stroking his fine big front after a brush with John in the entry. "Only somebody 'd ought to tell him where to wear it. He 's all right, John is. Fine boy. Only he 'll lose it off astern one o' these days. An' he 'd oughter roll his pants legs down."

"My land alive!" cried Mrs. Padelford, "an' him goin' to the deepo an' prob'ly to see his girl!"

"Got a girl, eh! Well, he's a right smart boy. I allus liked his clean shirt. Now me, when I kep' a light, I might as well 'a' ben tendin' hogs. Soakin' in karrosene oil the whole time, an' pitch, an' paint, an' grease, an' whitewash, 'specially with the foghorn. I don't know a livin' man as all round clean as John, 'thout it's Jim Davis. Jim's the only man I know can fire a locomotive in a gingham shirt an' not dirt the bosom. Yes, John's all right, any end up. Where did ye say he wuz bound this time?"

"Well, of course it's no business of mine, but I should say, now ye ask me right out, that it's the tallest o' them two Van Beauregard girls, or whatever their name is, over to the Point. Over to 'Lodge Ledge,' yer know. Old man Van's daughters. The tallest of 'em. John sees 'em summers. John tells me consid'ble of his affairs, an' what he don't tell me of course I ask him. He had 'em over to the Light one day, to

my certain knowledge, an' some o' their lady friends, an' give 'em dinner."

"Well, exercise is half his vittles," said Ethan. "What 's the matter with his hevin' summer people over? Ain't he allus hed the whole kit an' kaboodle of 'em round, sence he went out t' the light? Why, he 's pop'lar, that 's all, that 's what John is. Well, I hope the girl 'll like his topper, that 's all. It 's a bully ole headpiece, my conscience!"

"Johnny 's real careful of that hat. Last time he wore it across he stopped here goin' to the city an' left it right on my centre-table, an' a newspaper over it, an' he 'd 'a' gone to the city plain bareheaded, I do believe, on'y he hed one of his ole caps along in his pocket that he wore. I guess he warn't goin' to see the girl that day."

"Hm," Ethan murmured, stretching his legs to get the full benefit of his pockets for his hands while he reflected. Then he pursed up his mouth, winked at Mrs. Padel-

ford's cat, and presently turned a respectful countenance towards Mrs. Padelford's continued story.

"He 'll make a good husband, on'y I don't know as he 'll pick out the right kind o' wife for him to hev. Now that Alice Van-what-is-it, I don't believe she 's ever hed a particle of bringin' up myself. But John, he 'd jest build a board fence 'round any woman he set out to like, he 's that lovin' an' fond. Now that day he was goin' to hev that comp'ny, he come over to me 'bout it. He come to see ef I wuz n't usin' all my dishes ef he could borrow some. He hed them rooms, then, for housekeepin' over in the storehouse that they took away from him an' made an oil room out of bime-bye. So I gin him a real good settin' out o' dishes. . . . He did n't hev much to fix up with, nor no carpets down, nor no carpets, I guess, an' not much of a place to give a party anyway. I tried to advise him. I says, 'Them folks likes clams best, an' fish,

John,' I says, 'an' they admire to eat their vittles ou' doors,' I says; but John he would n't be said. I allus feel like an own mother to John, an' so I helped him fix his party. I says, 'What ye goin' to give 'em to eat, sonny,' I says, an' he says, 'Well, Ma,' says he, 'I got two, three molasses doughnuts an' a mock mince pie I cooked in my watch last night, an' what do ye think o' dandelion greens?' says he. Well, I told him, says I, 'Dandelions is all right,' says I, 'ef ye got a nice piece salt pork cookin' 'long with 'em.' So he 'lowed he hed, an' some elegant canned peaches. So I guess he set out as good a meal o' vittles as ever them Van people hed to eat. But he did n't never talk about it afterwards. Poor John, he hain't never hed no mother, an' he 's jest the age o' the boy I hed drownded."

It was nearly tea-time, and still Mrs. Bunce sat telling Mrs. Padelford about the

captain's "typhoid," and his sage, and his hops, and other details of his slow convalescence, when Mrs. Padelford, looking up to reply, caught sight of something in the garden that made her cry out in dismay, and still further delayed Mrs. Bunce.

"Oh! oh! my goodness' sake alive!" she wailed. "How 'll I ever git it away frum him! Whatever made me hev it in the wide world where he 'd find it! Johnny left it here only ha' past four, when he come in frum the city with Beulah, while he wuz cartin' his stuff down, an' now he 'll like as not come in any minute after it, an' there 's Father got it! Oh, dear me,— oh, poor old Father!"

A white-haired old man in minister's clothes passed the window, smiling and talking to himself as he pottered about the garden, now and again lifting off the silk hat to rub it tenderly with his coat sleeve.

"Poor Father!" wailed Mrs. Padelford. "I should n't wonder ef he thinks it 's most

meetin' time. He 's allus ben this way sence half-brother died, an' I took him. I never did take after stepfather, myself, nor his folks. He 's got such a lot o' learnin' when his mind 's in order, or wuz, an' elegant manners. An' now he 's got that hat! Oh, dear me! I dunno how I 'll ever git it away frum him. He hain't hed one of his own sence half-brother died. He used to keep him in hats. An' he allus wears his best clo'es, Sabbath day an' week day, Father does!"

"Could n't ye kinder coax it off'n him with somethin' else?" suggested Mrs. Bunce with eager kindness. "Mebbe he 'd like to hold the cat awhile. Don't he like cats?"

"Oh, yes, he likes cats," said Mrs. Padelford. "But 't ain't that. He 'd give me the hat quick nuff ef I set out to git it off'n him, but he 'd take it so hard. Kills me to see stepfather feel bad."

Just then the old man disappeared from the garden, and presently came into the

room with slow step and bowed head. He laid his hat on the table and folded his hands before him as he stood silent a moment, then lifted them as if in benediction.

"He's goin' to ask a blessin'!" Mrs. Padelford whispered nervously to Mrs. Bunce, and then broke down and cried into her lifted apron corner as the sweet words of the benediction rose and fell.

"Hello, Ma! What's up now?" shouted John, bolting in breezily, and halting suddenly as he saw the old man advancing with hand held out in churchly greeting, and Mrs. Bunce making signs to him behind the old man's back.

"Great stuff, dad," he cried heartily, as he saw his precious hat on the minister's head, and understood. "Fits yer like yer skin, old boy! Don't yer never let nobody git it away from ye," he said, clapping the old man on the shoulder. "Wonder I never see it before, dad! I vow I b'lieve yer mistrusted I'd git it away frum ye,

myself, dad! Well, good-day, folks, here I be an' here I ain't! So long!"

And John was gone. And in the calm at dusk there came singing ashore from the boat flying home, —

"She 's — the — on — li —est — one — I — love."

CHAPTER XIV

ONE SIDE OF A LOVE STORY

"YES, I'm thinkin' o' gittin' merried," said Ethan. "Ben gittin' roun' to it fer year 'n' half now. But by gosh! I would n't do it, now, not on no account, ef it warn't standin' in my own light not to. There 's that ole boardin' house a-settin' on that blazin' beach a-starin' at me; could git the charge o' that to-morrow ef I wuz a merried man, which I ain't, nor don't wisht I wuz. Well, I 'm a darned fool, I vow I be, lettin' that boardin' house slip through my fingers. But by gum, I do hate the women so! Allus did, — I dunno why, an' that 's jest the mischief of it. Hain't gut nothin' agin 'em as I know on, — allus treated me splendid. But women! By

gosh, I hain't got no manner o' use for 'em! Dunno why. My mother, now, she 's a good ole woman, an' my sisters, good as can be, fer women. But my land! keep the whole pack of 'em out'n my sight an' I 'll thank ye! An' now comes long I got ter marry fer chance ter make a dollar! Got ter be infernally tied up ter a woman. Makes me sweat thinkin' of it, an' like as not I 'll hev ter git religion, too. But 't ain't no use a-cussin', I got ter marry an' swaller my feelin's, or I don't hev that boardin' house next season. An' what 's more, I be mortal tired a-cookin' my vittles. Ben keepin' house fer year 'n' half now, an' 'fore that I was a-cookin' on the ole Mary Ella to the West Indies; an' there 's dish-washin'. I tell yer what, Capt'n, I 'd ruther starve than cook — but I 'd ruther cook than wash dishes. That 's what women is fer — to slop roun'. I got ter marry ter git my dishes washed. Oh my Lord! an' like as not she 'll make my

clo'es! I know a woman down to Millington allus makes her ole man's clo'es. Don't fit him no more 'n a shirt on a handspike, but good Lord! he can't help himself!

"Hev I picked her out yet? Well, I dunno but what I hev. Got one I guessed would answer 'bout four years ago. She 's ready any time I be, takes her observations from me, I 'd hev you understand. But Lord! she dunno the fust thing how to cook, an' like as not I 'll hev to learn her everythin' frum the word go. An' a woman is a reg'lar mule, — terrible contrary. Hain't got their match on top the ground fer cussedness!

"Keeps her eye peeled, likely, ter see me a-comin' — but I can't spend my time racin' after her ter keep a-tellin' of her I 'm goin' ter marry her when I git ready! My Lord! I 'd jest as lief go — hain't got nothin' agin the goin', as I know on, barrin' the fare!

"No, we ain't a-goin' to quarrel, don't you take no fear, — I shan't speak ter her

more 'n onct a month, when we do git ter housekeepin'. She kin fight all she wants to, so 's she don't bother me none! Reckon she 'll tire o' doin' all the jawin', after a while.

"No, she ain't no gret of a talker, Cap'n, — allus awful quiet and awful lovin' — oh my Lord! all women be; that's why I hate 'em, mor 'n half, I reckon. Wisht I hed n't never set eyes on her!

"Awful stiddy worker. Lord! hate them stiddy kind! Make me crazy! Well, I 'm thinkin' some o' gittin' down her way next Friday. Cap'n Buck, he 's give me a chance on that new schooner o' hisn, — dunno but what I 'll go down. Dunno as it 'll pay to, I don't care a cuss about seein' her, but ef I do go an' marry her, an' — darn the whole consarn! I wisht there warn't no women!

"I dunno, Cap'n, but what I will take up with your offer, — I 'd kinder hate ter dis'pint yer when yer so sot on my goin'."

CHAPTER XV

TOLD BY TWO

"THANKFUL HOPKINS hez hed a letter from Phœbe."

"You don't tell me! Must be more 'n a year sence she 's wrote last. Thankful wuz terrible mad when she took off the way she did, and I don't feel to blame her, to go over to Rye to try to begin an' do fer herself jest as ef they wuz poor folks or Thankful warn't wantin' her to home, an' with them lame hands her sickness lef' her, an' all, an' Thankful all alone, too. Phœbe allus wuz terrible uppish an' high-handed, an' it would 'a' ben jest like her to of made out Thankful wanted her to go, which everybody knows she did n't. An' with them lame hands of hers, 'course she could n't expect to git a

place. I suppose she 's wrote to come home. Thankful, she wuz jest right to hold it was bemeanin' both of 'em, Phœbe goin' housekeepin' to a boardin' house. But I told her it did n't require no hands an' no head to buy victuals an' spy round, an' that 's about all Phœbe would hev to 'xpect to do. 'Lookin' ain't cookin',' I says to Thankful, 'nor 't ain't lowerin' yourself neither.' But Thankful she kep' on jest as mad as ever, an' so I 've heerd say she told Phœbe she need n't put herself out sendin' no letters back, fer she should n't read 'em. Now war n't that like her? Well, I s'pose Phœbe got done tryin' to git merried, an' so she 's comin' home. Like as not she 'll take in pants to finish, or dressmakin'. What did you say she said in the letter? I allus thought that Hatchkins feller treated her mean to beau her round like he did an' droppin' her."

"Well, he wuz over to Rye, too, as I understand."

"Good land! You don't say!"

"An' I should jedge from what the letter said he 'd ben there straight along."

"I want to know! Well, I should think Phœbe would hev took shame to herself hangin' round Rye jest 'cause her beau wuz there."

"Well, she did n't exactly hang round, so to speak, I believe. I understand he got her the job in the fust place."

"My gracious! Well, she allus wuz terrible underhand. Why, I talked to her jest before she went away about that same Hatchkins, an' I give him a right good goin' over, an' she 's never said a word, the sly thing. You 'd 'a' thought she 'd 'a' said all about it right then. Well, I s'pose he got tired of her an' so she 's comin' home."

"I believe she wuz his — I forgit the name; something of an amanusis, I believe, in the office, whatever that is; kinder wrote his letters, I expect, on a typewriter, likely."

"There! Did n't I tell her he wuz lazy! An' did you say she give up keepin' the boardin' house all the while?"

"Well, yes, as I understand it, she did n't never keep the boardin' house. She begun in the office an' wuz there a year jest as cosey as ever you see an' livin' with his aunt an' gettin' twenty dollars a week for it. Thankful she jest could n't speak when she read it in the letter, an' there wuz all them letters of Phœbe's she hed with ten dollars a week in 'em all pitched into the kitchen stove an' Phœbe feelin' bad 'cause she did n't know it, an' Thankful would n't write her back. An' she would n't never hev opened this one, only they wuz an out West postmark on it an' a new kind of writin' on the outside."

"Well, I do declare, an' so it 's a year since Phœbe wrote her, you said. What did you say Thankful said she said?"

"She said they 'd ben out West a year, ever sence they wuz fust married."

"Married! Who! What! What did you say?"

"She says Hatchkins hez got him a mill of his own out there. His father's died an' left it to him. An' so I should jedge it wuz Mr. Hatchkins she married. Although she did n't really sesso, in so many words."

"My land alive!"

"An' Phœbe hez got a baby."

"Good Lord! I 'd never hev believed it! Ef she hed n't wrote it with her own pen in hand."

"An' she 's goin' to call it Thankful Hopkins Hatchkins, after her, the fifteenth of next month, an' wants her to come on. St. Paul, I believe the place is, in Minneapolis. It 's a girl."

"Well, I do declare to goodness. An' wuz it on a typewriter?"

"No. Mr. Hatchkins he wrote it himself, I believe. Phœbe got him to. An' Thankful never mistrusted. An' she 's goin'."

CHAPTER XVI

A GLADSTONE BAG

"SHE wuz allus a kind of light-minded, but real nice an' seemly," Mrs. Padelford said, "an' that 's why she wuz ast off a good deal summers. Down to her aunt's, mostly, up to Rye, that married folks by the name of Jones. An' they set a lot by Melia Bunce, same as Captin does, himself. An' so he stopped in one mornin' an' said would I jest go down to meet the evenin' boat an' come 'long the Neck with Melia, her comin' home that time from Rye after dark. So I said I 'd be real glad to, so I did. I wuz down to the wharf so 's to meet her on the gang plank, an' she come a-tiltin' down with a summer hat an' a white dress all han'some rick-rack, an' a-tumbled an ole draw-string

brown flannel baig into my arms. I wuz terrible glad to see Melia, an' I 'd laid out to carry her baggage anyway, so I ast her if they wuz anythin' else but the baig, an' she said no, only this, an' that she wuz goin' to carry herself. The baig wuz stuffed as tight as a bullet, an' knobby, an' jest almost bustin' out the top. An' what she wuz carryin' wuz awful light-lookin', long an' wide, kinder like a bird-cage, an' all wrapped up with newspaper an' crooked string every which way round it.

"I says, 'Hain't you got no valise, child?' says I.

"An' says she, 'Me a valise! Land sakes alive, — Mis' Padelford,' says she. 'What 'd I do with a valise? I did n't on'y stay but three weeks!'

"'Well,' says I, 'I did n't know but you might 'a' wore clo'es while you wuz gone,' says I. She warn't but fifteen, but real kinder dressy on account of her mother settin' a lot by her.

"'An' anyway,' says I, 'ef you did n't wear no clo'es, I did n't know but mebbe you 'd 'a' wore undergarments,' says I.

"'Why, my gracious,' says she, 'I dunno what you 're talkin' 'bout, Mis' Padelford; my clo'es is in thet baig I give ye! I say I warn't on'y gone but three weeks! I did n't take but two hull changes,' says she, 'an' a pair of ole boots. You stave up yer good ones in the bushes,' says she. 'I fixed it this way,' says she. 'I wore one hull set o' clo'es down there, that 's one,' says she. 'Put 'em on the very las' minute before I started,' says she. 'So them 's the ones I wore the hull fust week,' says she. 'Well,' says she, 'when I took them fust ones off, why of course I put on the nex' set,' says she, 'an' then there wuz the last set,' says she, 'ready to come home in.'

"'Well,' says I, 'I think you managed splendid, but I dunno how you gut 'em in this baig,' says I. An' she kep' a-laughin' an' could n't hardly walk, an' then she said

how she an' her cousin hed rammed 'em in an' bust the string an' put in another an' braced up agin the wall an' hauled on it, an' how clo'es takes up more room when they 've ben wore awhile an' so forth, an' how them two sot on the baig an' jumped on it, an' so forth. Then she says, says she, quietin' down some, 'I gut my silk dress in this carbore box,' says she. 'Gut the box into the groc'ry store, on purpose,' says she. 'Haf' to be orful careful not to jom silk,' says she; 'mother 'd kill me ef I jommed it,' says she. 'I did n't wear it but once,' says she, ''cause the second Sunday it rained an' I darsn't, but I hed ter hev it 'long with me,' says she, 'folks allus does. But I hev ter be terrible careful of it,' says she, 'not to jom it.'"

CHAPTER XVII

THE FALL OF ANGEL

"I COULD N'T never trim hats good, myself, an' that 's why I took it over 'shore. An' Angel trims 'em so nice seems as if some the folks over to the village look acttially pretty in 'em, sometimes, an' no mistake. Miss Hanna did real handsome by Angel, gettin' her learned the millinery business, over to Rye. Yes, indeed. Not bein' own folks. An' Angel 's a credit to her when all 's said 'n' done, seein' she never did hev no parents nor no antecestry whatever, fer 's we know, 'cause of course the paper she hed pinned to her baby dress, in that box she come in, warn't no real pedigree, although Miss Hanna allus kep' it real careful in the 'riginal raisin box with the dress, an' it

wuz 'n elegant one, my land! I should say so! Time an' agin I 've laid thet little yeller paper in my hand an' read the readin', an' somehow I allus felt, an' I do now, thet thet little paper seemed to tell how Angel hed a mother once.

"'My little Angel,' — well, 't ain't much to say, but I never could seem to git red of the notion that somethin' inside thet paper, or back or front of it, sounded as ef thet mother did n't want to fetch Angel to the doorsteps, an' she 'd ben kinder made to hev to. That 's how it allus looked to me, as I say.

"An' often I 've said to Miss Hanna, I 've said, 'She ain't none o' our folks, ma'am, no, she ain't none o' us, an' her ways ain't goin' to be our ways,' I says. An' Miss Hanna she never took no counsel. My land, Angel wuz the light of her eyes! Poor Miss Hanna, an' she keeps her blinds down the whole week through, these days. An' Angel grown up so pert, an' so sperited,

an' so sassy, an' so handsome it fair made yer eyes ache ter see her! Time an' again I 've said to Miss Hanna, 'Angel 's bound to marry a man, an' none o' our boys, either,' I said, time an' again. An' Miss Hanna would say so proud an' feelin', 'Angel loves only me,' an' time an' again I 've said, 'You ain't a man,' I 've said, but Miss Hanna never marked my words.

"An' now I wish I hed n't never hed thet hat. Good land alive, who 'd ever hev thought I 'd be the one to put a stumblin' block an' a pitfall in Angel's way, an' me so worried 'bout her, fust an' last! An' how I did fuss an' bother gittin' the money together fer thet hat, too! Husband, he wanted me to hev a real hat, it 's some six years now sence I hed a real hat, an' still I don't git to meetin' much, from the light-house. An' Angel made me up an elegant tall one, with a kind of an all round brim, an' feathers behind, an' kind o' knocked up on one side, with bunched up bachelor's

buttons, an' black-eyed Susans, floppy an' fixy, — it wuz jest the thing fer Angel, an' I paid her two dollars fer it when I picked out the trimmin'. Angel often put it on, while it wuz comin' 'long, to show me how nice she looked in it — I mean how nice it looked on her. An' now of course I wisht I hed n't never set out to hev a real hat.

"The ticket man seen her hev it on when she went down the gang-plank with the strange gentleman two weeks ago Friday. I 'd love to 've give Angel thet hat, out an' out, but kills me to think I ever led little Angel astray. Our little Angel!

"I hope she won't never lay herself out to return it to me. I could n't bear to see it, an' it would be consid'ble wore."

CHAPTER XVIII

A LIGHTHOUSE STEW

THE dories swinging alongside came tilting against the tower in the tide rip, and bumped hard, and jarred the little gray cell room where the company sat waiting to eat. Ethan Benedict was spread on the lounge, with his long legs set out to trip the host prettily as he went to and fro in the breakfast-getting.

"Lord! I 'll hev to hang up on a nail, Colonel, bum-bye!" he said, in mock apology, as the old lightkeeper saved himself once and again from a fall over his bulky visitor.

"Tell you what 't is, Colonel, you 'll hev to git you a bigger lighthouse, or git smaller folks to come a-visitin'!" said Ethan.

John was very quiet. This light was his old stamping-ground. That was the very lounge where he used to sleep out his watches. He was thinking of Jim, poor old beggar. This big, bothersome, hollow pillar up through the middle of the tower, this was where the deuced clock weight of the lantern used to go thundering down to the cellar when the chain broke. And Hiram himself was twisted up in the same old trick of trying to set a sociable table in this little round cell with the pillar in the middle, and the stove, and the sink, and the lounge, and the company filling it up.

"Ever see Jim these times?" said Ethan, harking back from the stew to other days. "Now warn't he double peculiar! Allus thought Jim wuz jest about twenty-five cents out of a quarter short, myself; eh, boys? Must 'a' nigh killed yer with that ole cornet o' his'n, John. I used to hear him over on the shore road blowin' them seven tunes he did n't know, till the guv'-

ment took a holt an' set on him, when the ole Samuel Adams took his old pipe for a fog-signal, an' got on the rocks accordin'. Ahem! Colonel, how's the fodder progressin'?"

Old Hiram Huxtable was a colonel only by Ethan's courtesy. Years before, as he said, he had passed a short time in the army, but no one ever knew what he did there. The conviction that he had been some kind of a servant of his country had weighed heavily in getting him a "guv'ment" position, but it was the very irony of the reward to set him down at Sculpin Ledge Light. He hated salt water, and he was "scared blue" in a boat. The smallest kind of a dory could lay a course for him any way of the wind and tide, and the saltiest old salt would have been barely at home on Sculpin Ledge. And once there, Hiram was bound to stay. Ethan and John soon found out how things were, and used to come over with his stores, and his mail, and

whatever. Hiram could fly a towel from the gallery and have an attendant at once. But whether or not Hiram ever shot human beings, on the wrong side of the war, he was a dabster after sea-fowl. Innocent coots and wild geese that took no alarm at that brown chimney in the sea, came down in passing to go into the old lightkeeper's kettle. The boys liked stew, too, and the towel had hailed them out that very morning. Ethan admired to eat; he often said so, and allowed that Hiram could cook better than he could, which was true.

"Gittin' in nuff seasonin', Colonel, into that — ere — well, what jest do yer call that ere, sir?" said Ethan, with too much pride to peep.

Hiram was opening the lid of the kettle, adding a dash of salt, and bent an inscrutable look on Ethan.

"Ever eat stooed sea-gull?" he asked.

Ethan's expression was as nimble as his wits, and he gave no sign of disappointment.

"Lord, no! but I ain't agin beginnin', ef I ain't too old to learn. I gut to git on shore 'fore sundown, however, Colonel, an' I better begin quick ef I 've gut to chew long! Lord! I 've eat biled crow, time an' agin. Only pelican. I can't go pelican, nor my brother. I 'd hev to leave you, Colonel, ef it wuz pelican in the pot. Rec'-lect them peeps, John, we hed when you wuz keepin' here? We hed 'em into a stoo, but some folks likes peep pie. Lord! takes ez much ez forty peeps to a sizable pie, now, don't it? Ain't more 'n a mouthful to a peep, by Jove, but good when you git it. Beats yer coots all holler," he said towards Hiram.

"Ahem," said Hiram, putting on his glasses to dust in pepper now.

"An' then there 's plover, John. Plover pie 's good, too, an' I got a brother kin cook yer up ez nice a mess of wild geese, now, ez ever yer 'd want ter eat. Poor ole feller; he 's sick now. Won't never cook no more.

But he up an' eat a fish dinner 't other day, an' ast after the folks. Now warn't that interestin' ? " Ethan loped out to keep an eye on the dories, fretting at their lines as the tide lisped round the tower. The sun was now high, pouring in at the small porthole windows, and falling cheerily on the shining stove and the shining pot that promised great things as it bubbled and purred, and sent off a far-reaching fragrance of onions and game that quickly called Ethan in again.

Hiram dished out the stew in platefuls from the steaming pot, and they dragged chairs up round the table at his bidding.

They spooned it, and clattered, and sipped, and sucked in silence, till the bone-piles had risen high between the plates, and the guests tilted back in their chairs and sighed with a great and deep satisfaction.

" Colonel," said Ethan, with an air, " you done yerself proud on thet stoo. Never 'd mistrusted it wuz sea-gull ef you hed n't

give it away. I 'd 'a' most thought, now, it wuz coots — three, four reg'lar coots. You done yerself proud, sir! I 'm glad I come! I dunno when I 've eat so hearty of stoo myself, but I must say I do know a stoo when I see one, an' that stoo, Colonel, — thet wuz a stoo, sir!"

"Ever eat loon?"

CHAPTER XIX

HIS FAVORITE TUNE

"I've — er — called this meetin' together, friends, Captain Hopkins, sir, an' Deacon Willow — ahem — to do suitable respect to the — er — the honored mem'ry of our departed brother an' neighbor, Ebeneezer Cook, gentlemen."

Deacon Stowell rose and lifted off the red-hot front stove lids, and the three friends rocked back to a comfortable distance from the fiery furnace. The snow-laden wind searched for them at the windows, and dared them out of doors again.

"Looks like we'd hev poor buryin' weather," murmured gentle Deacon Willow.

"Likely to drift up consid'ble on the

buryin' ground road, comin' in so frum the east'ard," said Captain Hopkins sociably.

"To continner," Deacon Stowell resumed with suggestive emphasis, "ez I've remarked — er — previously — it's my idee, bein' close friends of Ebeneezer's, you an' me, Captain Hopkins an' Deacon Willow — we ought ter kinder make preparations, so to speak, fer follerin' out — er — our — ahem! respected brother's wishes, respectin' thet ere toon o' his 'n."

"Same toon he allus sung rowin' in shore frum his vessil, I take it," said Captain Hopkins.

"Yes, sir, same, sir — thet's it, an' daytimes, too, an' Sundays. Seems he never could n't ketch a-holt of no other, an' he — er — meanin' no disrespec', he did n't mean to leave a-holt of it. Now, Ebeneezer — er — he allus hed me promise I'd hev thet toon sung to his funeral, an' — er — it ain't no Sunday toon, gentlemen, an' I ain't sure the parson would agree. So it's

jest my idee, gentlemen, Captain Hopkins an' Deacon Willow, fer you 'n me ter kinder jine ourselves in the singin' of it, comin' in 'long astern o' the hearse, gentlemen."

"Me! I can't sing a damned note!" said Captain Hopkins stoutly.

"I dunno the words," said Deacon Willow, "but I guess I could make out ter kinder la-la 'long."

"Beginnin' abreast the post office," said Deacon Stowell, laying the course neatly, "an' on'y singin' one verse, we 'd git done 'bout down t' the fork o' the roads, an' not disturb the reg'lar ceremonies none."

"I tell ye I can't sing a damned note!" said the captain earnestly.

"I dunno no words," Deacon Willow reminded them again.

"Well," said Deacon Stowell, "we must do the best we kin, gentlemen, unitin' together, t' honor — er — our friend, Ebeneezer Cook, in his departure. I 'll do the heft o' the toon myself, an' you, Deacon Willow

an' Captain Hopkins, hum along ez fur 's you 're able 'long o' me, so 's I won't be hollerin' out alone, gentlemen. Yes, sir, we 'll do our dooty — er — by Ebeneezer."

The long procession of country sleighs and folks on foot lengthened out solemnly down the village street from the church, between the piled-up drifts. The three friends, muffled in great-coats and caps, walked together behind the hearse, stumbling heavily through the deep snow. Just beyond the post office a curious sound arose. The mourners leaned out of their sleighs to look and listen, and the villagers ranged along the roadside gazed and wondered, till the graceless murmur behind the hearse rose to more assured melody, and everybody knew it for "Ebeneezer's toon." Many and many a summer night the captain's home-coming had sung itself in at the open doors of the little seaport town as the "toon" rang out on the bay. And now it would ring across sea and land no more.

One voice and another took it up, and presently a queer, strong chorus was singing along behind the dead man, tenderly mindful of "the other day:" —

"Hail Columbia,
Happy land!
Hail ye heroes,
Heaven-born ban'."

And far away up the white hillside, from the shore road the last lines came back: —

"That fought and fit and
Bled and died;
Hail Co — lum — bye — a!"

CHAPTER XX

HONORABLE JACKSON JONES

"Birds is queer fowl. Now when I wuz over on Homer Shoal Light, the durndest paper come one day from the Gover'ment. Ever hear about that? Thunderin' big envylope, wrote large on the outside an' lettered big on the corner. Thinks, says I to myself, 'Here 's my walkin'-papers, sure as a gun. Now what the devil hev I ben up to, to git fired an' me not know it?' So I opened the envylope an' turned out the inside, an' there 't wuz, nothin' but a kind of a formulee, a lot o' printin' here an' there, an' place fer me ter say where I wuz an' who I be, 'fore I done any more.

"Seems it wuz frum Honorable Jackson Jones, or some sich, of the Smithtonian In-

stitoot, gittin' the privilege of the Lighthouse Board to allow himself t' ask me, an' a lot more polite stuff like that, ter kinder 'sist him with his nat'chel hist'ry goin's-on. I see there wuz a mistake, not bein' that way myself. The fool questions on that paper wuz clean outer my line o' business. Ast when I see the fust robin, an' the last tree-toad, an' which way wuz he jumpin', an' so forth. I see it come frum my post-office address not bein' the same ez my home address. Now my post-office address is Mr. Ethan Benedict, Esq., Woodside, Maine. Thet 's where my letters come. An' I lived out on Homer Shoal Light, in ten feet o' water. Thet 's where I come. So, not hevin' no personal acquaintance with me, ez I know on, Mr. Jones he nat'chelly concluded I lived over to Woodside, an' ri' down in the middle o' them birds an' snakes an' other vermin he wanted so bad to hear frum.

"Well, so I went over his paper careful, thinkin' I might give him some information

off'n the farm where I wuz raised. But Lord! I could n't remember when I see the fust or the last o' any one fowl. I never did care no gret fer flyin' things. They come an' they went, an' devil I cared where an' when they flew, long ez they did n't hit me.

"Well, thinkin' his paper over, I seen it wuz most likely he wanted to hear frum them birds thet wuz due long in the spring. It wuz Christmas when I gut the letter. So I set down to turn it over, thinkin' back along. Now it 's jest this way with a bird. Fust you see him an' then you don't, dependin' on what you 're doin' an' whether he 's in a hurry or not. Now when it comes along fall, mebbe I look over on Sculpin Shoal some day, an' says to myself, 'Gulls is late this year,' an' the very next day mebbe I see thet shoal covered thick — allus is, 'bout fust of September anyway. Now I look at it this way: ef I 'd ben ashore thet day, like ez not I would n't 'a' seen them gulls, an' so

how could I 'a' helped Mr. Jones with his formulee? Said a lot on the back about not sayin' what you hed n't seen, an' then says, 'When 'd you see the fust gull?' an' so forth. I call it confusin'.

"An' same with robins. Ef I see a robin an' take notice an' bum-bye see another one, how 'm I goin' to tell whether the fust one I seen wuz the last one? I call it a fool question, myself, askin' a man how many robins he seen a day, when they warn't tagged.

"Well — there wuz a lot I could 'a' told him, too, thet did n't show up under no head in his formulee. I seen a golden oriole settin' in broad noon an' sun on the top of the lighthouse half an hour, an' out of oriole season too. An' I seen a carrier-pigeon set on the boathouse 'n hour 'n' a half one time. An' I seen forty plover set on the rail o' the gallery in a fog like folks round a fire, an' look in the winder at me windin' the lamp up. Lord! I could n't lay a finger on them

live ones. They wuz allus plenty banged their heads flat agin the glass an' laid stone dead round the ground when I wuz over to Round Island. I used to send a mess over to the Homer Shoal folks them days, an' when I changed over, the Round Island folks sent the mess to me, thet 's how it wuz. Why, them folks hez picked up seventeen kinds o' small birds dead one single night o' fog — half a bushel, I should jedge. Seemed too bad to heave 'em overboard, but warn't no other way. Cat wuz full to bust, an' we hed to clean up the grounds 'cordin' to orders. An' I 've hed me a black duck come right in the lantern window, glass half an inch thick. I dunno how he done it myself. But there he wuz, an' we set a new pane quick as we could an' ast a blessing over him fer supper. An' I seen storks over to Round Island, an' wild geese — Why I seen a wild goose asleep! right under the end o' the island one time, head under his wing. My Lord! if Mr. Honorable What 's

his-name hed ben round then with his gig-lamps I guess he 'd 'a' hopped quick! An' I seen puffins here, an' a whale, an' sharks, an' other sich, 'peared he wanted to hear frum them kind, too.

"Well, I wrote him back, polite ez I could make it, thet I 'd forgut what I hed see, an' when I 'd seen it, an' enclosed his paper. I told him I guessed the address wuz the bottom of the trouble, but no harm done this time round. I told him the names o' two three folks over to the mainland I guessed could set him up all right, the Cong'gational minister, an' the Editor of the Woodside Enterprise, an' so forth. But my Lord! Makes me laugh every time I meet a robin, sence thet time. 'Fust or last?' says I, 'yer durned little beggar! Last or fust?'"

CHAPTER XXI

ALICE

THERE was a little procession on the way to the cemetery late one Sunday afternoon. Mother Padelford was going to decorate Ed's grave, and John's. The soldiers' graves had been decorated by the town weeks before, but Ed was not a soldier.

They walked soberly down the quaint harbor side streets, — Beulah and Mother Padelford and little Cousin Abijah. A few Sabbath-day loungers stood about the fish-wharves, and some of the young people of the town passed by, walking two by two, all old friends and neighbors; but the Padelfords, in stiff, new mourning set apart from light greetings, were regarded with awe and deference. Mother Padelford

bowed solemnly, and the children exchanged glances. Abijah carried the flowers for his uncle's grave and for "Jack's," — two big bunches of lilac in a forest of ribbon grass. He was swinging them by his side, the trailing streamers of grass dragging tattered in the dust.

"Hold them flowers up, nice, son," said Mrs. Padelford. "They won't look fit to set on yer uncle's grave, time you git there."

The little procession filed in at a narrow gateway that seemed to lead into deep woods, and gathered round a fresh mound of earth on the edge of a clearing, still far away from the crowded graves in the larger cemetery. This was the humbler "lot" section.

"It 's real kinder sweet here, like meetin', now ain't it, ef we could n't afford to lay him 'long with the rest of 'em up yonder." Mother Padelford dropped down onto the turf at the foot of the mound, tired and warm and full of new sorrow.

"So there he lays! He was all I hed in the world, 'ceptin' the children. Poor Ed! An' warn't he terrible long! There he lays. Most six feet, he wuz, in his stockin' feet, when he wuz alive, Ed wuz."

Her tearful eyes rested presently on the pretty pond below the hill, blue and still in its rim of sedge, and overhung with trees.

"I kinder wish Alice hed hed her John laid here by Ed. They did set so much by each other; an' prob'ly it 's prettier here than 't is where he lays now. But I dunno. I hev n't seen it, an' I dunno as Alice hed the say of it, anyway; most prob'ly not, not bein' nothin' to him as you might say. You go git some water, sonny, out'n the pond, fer his flowers and father's, an' we 'll be gittin' along to John.

"Them pansies grows handsome on father's grave. They allus is a real graveyard flower. I 'm glad I took some for John's grave, too. Well, we 'll be goin' now. We 'll git father a real good head-

stone as soon as you git you a job, Abijah. I don't seem to like to hev him lay without one."

The little procession straggled up the winding path across the main cemetery, halting again on the far edge under thick-set trees.

"Well, I do believe John 's got the best place, after all," said Mother Padelford. "But I don't gredge him. John wuz a good boy, Johnnie wuz.

"Let 's see. Here 's two graves, an' how 'm I ter know which from t'other. Oh! I know! The sexton said John 's wuz the one next the fence. Yes, here it is. This is John's. The other one is that stranger's the town buried. The dirt is kinder poor, an' thet 's a fact. Sexton said it wuz; said I 'd hev ter hev some good dirt put on ter make flowers grow in it. I guess I 'll git Alice ter git thet dirt, seein' how she set such a lot by John, when they come down from Boston. They allus do come down in June,

mostly, only this year they don't seem to be gittin' here so early. I dunno why. Alice did think such a pile of John, you 'd think they 'd want ter be right round where he used to be; but I dunno.

"Tur'ble genteel folks, they be, — them Van Beauregards. John, he did n't belong with thet kind no more 'n I do. He warn't only a lightkeeper — but them two wuz allus together summers. And times he 'd go down to Boston. John never wuz fer talkin' much 'bout Alice, an' I guess most likely it wuz all along of his likin' her consid'ble. Some folks is thet way; an' after all it don't make no odds one way or t'other, an' I allus calk'lated John knowed his own business best. Folks said they wuz real engaged, but I allus held to it in my own mind thet John would 'a' told me ef it hed ben; an' no matter how they did reckon themselves, I guess they warn't fer marryin' anybody else in a hurry. That 's how it looked ter me, an' I guess Alice 'll git the

dirt fast 'nuff when I tell her how 't is 'bout a graveyard an' flowers growin'. I really think ef they hed ben real engaged John would 'a' told me 'fore he died, though he died kinder sudden at the last. I dunno, I 'm sure, how poor John would 'a' done, livin' right into the Van Beauregard family. He hed n't no manners at all, — thet is, no table manners, — an' them Van's kep' a real genteel table the whole time, company or not. John he used to say to me, 'Lots o' dishes, marm,' he 'd say, 'table all covered with 'em,' says he, 'but darned little vittles on 'em.' John allus wuz a gret hand ter live. So I expect they wuz real fashionable folks, besides their clo'es.

"He an' Alice wuz together two whole summers, an' I should think she 'd miss him a lot. She hain't ben down, though, sence the funeral. Awful pitiful funeral, John's wuz. He did n't hev no folks, on'y friends, an' the Odd Fellows follered the body. Warn't thet real sad! An' I 've heard say

sence then thet lots of people with folks belonging to 'em on both sides hes n't hed sech a big follering as John hed. He wuz tur'ble pop'lar. An' Alice wuz there, they said, on'y nobody seen her; she did n't git out at the grave.

"So here 's his grave, poor John! He knowed I would n't fergit him, poor boy! Ef he could think, down there, I guess I know what he 'd be sayin'. He 'd say I would n't fergit him, an' I ain't. Children, we must git him a good headstone jest as soon as we can. Why, ain't them real handsome flowers, now, in thet glass dish on the stranger's grave! I don't believe a mite but what they wuz meant fer John, 'cause thet stranger he did n't hev no friends, an' of course they would n't put flowers on his grave. I should n't wonder a mite ef Alice brought 'em down an' mistook the grave. Like as not. I shall ask her the first chance I git, fer of course she 'll feel bad to know she 'd mistook the grave. An' now they ain't no

good. I s'pose they 've took away the em-'lim off'n John 's grave, the one the light-house folks sent over. Said 'Our Friend' in kinder everlastin's, an' I did n't know but what I could git letters nuff off'n it ter spell 'John,' ter keep, but somebody 's took it away. Prob'ly the sexton's give it to Alice.

"Poor John! He did n't never think of death an' dyin'. I don't believe he wuz ever in a cemetery in his life till he wuz took in. An' he wuz so tur'ble reckless, so tur'ble full of life ter die. He wuz reckless an' heady, Johnnie wuz. I used t' say to him not ter go off t' the main shore in bad weather, or back agin, but sure as anybody wanted an errant done, John he wuz at it. I 'd jaw him t' keep him ter home, but he wuz jest one man in fifty t' handle a boat, an' seemed he 'd come off sound so many times he did n't hev no real rightful sense o' danger. An' it wuz kinder misleadin' to the ignorant of the water, 'cause he warn't scared

times when he 'd oughter ben, an' he 'd tell folks they wuz safe t' go in weathers when they wuz n't.

"I — it makes me real sad ter think over John. He said once when I wuz at him not ter go one time it blowed heavy, says he, 'Marm,' says he, — allus called me 'Marm,' 'ef I 'm ever drownded, hope it 'll be between the lighthouse an' Nob Noller Point;' an' 't was. Drownded right where he said ter be. An' all ter git thet fool woman ashore ter git her bonnet made, for Easter, thet Jordan woman, when the next day would 'a' done her, an' jest because she ast him! She feels real bad now, an' I should think she would. Awful still an' lonesome here fer John. He allus wuz real lively. I guess he 'd never 'a' thought he 'd 'a' ben a-layin' here under the trees. Seems as ef mebbe he 'd 'a' liked ter laid 'long the shore, somewheres.

"Well, I declare, what 's the matter with you, Beulah? Lord! hush up, child, you 'll

kill yourself cryin' so. Why, I would n't 'a' come ef I 'd known you wuz goin' ter feel bad. Git right up off'n thet grave, Beulah, an' don't you fret, child! I feel real bad myself, too. I allus did feel like a mother to Johnnie. Poor Johnnie! There, hush up, Beulah! We 'll go 'long home right off.

"Poor John! I shell come up here real often, an' set awhile. An' I shell speak ter Alice 'bout thet dirt, the fust chance I git. She set sech a lot by John."

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